Matched

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by LittleUggie

Summary

The government requires that all unmated alphas and omegas at the age of 30 must register with a matchmaking agency to be paired up and mated. After 5 years of no matches, Will finally gets called in with an extremely high match to one Dr. Hannibal Lecter. Neither of the men wanted a mate, but life doesn't always work out the way one wants...

Notes

When I first started this fic I had intended it to be a quick one shot, but before i knew it it was twice as long as I'd planned. I have quite a bit of it written, but it is not finished, so the first several chapters will go up pretty quick, but the later ones might take a little longer. Hope you enjoy! If you have any questions or suggestions, please put them in the comments. You can also drop me a message or dank meme on my tumblr: http://littleuggy.tumblr.com/

Chapter 1

The Match Mater office decor was aggressively cheerful as if they could plaster enough pictures of happy couples and families on the walls to make up for the fact that they were a government agency that all unmated alphas and omegas over the age of 30 had to register with. The logic behind the law was understandable. Dominance fights were a significant problem, and the science backing up the health risks for unmated persons of both gender designations was sound. The answer to these issues is the Agency of Alpha and Omega Affairs.

Founded during the baby boomer era in response to the population increase, the agency began opening up offices touting their fool proof system to match the most compatible mates. Nowadays, they used a combination of genetic testing, personality questionnaire, and lifestyle preferences to generate a compatibility quotient. High match scores are then introduced to each other. Sometimes people had to wait a while before a high enough compatibility match is found, and sometimes people have multiple matches high enough for mating and could pick which one they preferred. For those alphas and omegas who wanted to voluntarily sign up with a matchmaker, it was a great service. It was the government mandated part that made the department so controversial. Every few years there were calls by gender rights activists for reform, but other than a few superficial adjustments, offices like Match Mater still stand.

Will, despite being a government employee himself, did not like Big Brother telling him who he had to mate and by when. Still, the law is the law and it's really difficult to fly under the radar when he works for the FBI, so the day after his 30th birthday, he submits to the barrage of tests with ill grace. He manages to make it five years without pinging a match high enough for mandatory mating (he completely refuses to meet with any of the lower matches). It is enough to make him relax his guard, consider that maybe he is too defective for a mate (which really shouldn't be a relieving thought) when his number comes up.

An impressively high number if the overly eager matchmaker smiling brightly across her desk in the Stepfordesque office was to be believed.

"There has only been three documented cases of matches scoring in the 99th percentile, and you and your mate are the highest genetic match anyone has ever seen!"

"I don't have a mate." Will stares at the woman's teeth. He wonders how often she bleaches them, the light bouncing off of them was near mesmerizing.

She laughs, though Will can't tell at what, causing those teeth to flash. "Not yet. We've contacted your match and have scheduled your meeting for next Monday so you will need to inform your employer. They are required by law to give you a full week off. They will administer a suppressant flush prior to the meeting, but it'll be less of a strain on your body if you go ahead and stop taking them now. It is your choice whether you continue to utilize birth control, but they will need to know the type. It is best if you get a good night's sleep the night before the meeting and eat something light that morning. We also need you to fill out an

emergency contact form as well as a few other documents, which you can get from Linda at the front desk. You'll bring them with you to the facility where the meeting is to be held. Do you have any questions?"

Were you an auctioneer in a former life? Will thinks. It is possible he may be in shock.

"What's their name?"

"I'm sorry, I am not allowed to give you that information right now. It is to prevent the couple from meeting before the scheduled time."

"If we are suppose to mate anyway, why does it matter when we first meet?" *Why does the government care who we mate anyway? Why can't my body and life be mine?*

The woman's bright, bright smile doesn't falter, but he catches the tightening at the corners. "It is the Agency's policy, sir."

"Can you tell me anything at all about them?"

"Certainly, I have a dossier that you can take with you that has some basic information from your mate's profile."

She hands him a manila envelope that feels far too light for something so life altering.

"Please be at the Baltimore Match Mater Facility at 9 am next Monday. Directions are in the packet. If you fail to appear, you can be subject to legal repercussions including detainment." She stands and opens the door to usher him out of the office. "Don't forget to pick up those documents at the front desk. Have a great day and congratulations!"

He does not have a great day. He alternates between disbelief and panic, sometimes staring numbly at a spot on the wall and other times planning a oneway trip to Amsterdam. It is not until the next day that he can bring himself to look at the file on his match. It is just before dawn, and he has finally given up on sleep, sitting at his kitchen counter with a cup of coffee.

The contents of the unassuming envelope don't tell him much. Alpha male, 6'0", 170lbs, 45 years old, 99.6% match. That was it, not even as much information as a driver's license. He is pretty sure he has written up more details for a profile from a murder scene. His age is somewhat of a surprise. If his intended mate is ten years older, why hadn't Will been matched to him as soon as he registered five years ago? Maybe the man had a former mate who passed away, and he decided to reregister. It wasn't unheard of, but it was not required by law. Will hoped this was not the case. This situation was stressful enough without the shadow of a deceased spouse.

The match number does not mean much to him until he does a little googling. Apparently the average match percentage is 75.2. The agency does not consider a match mating viable unless it is a score of above 60%. A score of 80% is considered a very high match. Above 90% is nearly unheard of. So the toothy woman hadn't been exaggerating. A little more research tells him that couples with higher matches tend to feel a stronger draw to each other when they

first meet. He shuts his computer and goes and sits out on the porch watching the sun rise and trying very hard not to think.

Get Ready

Chapter Summary

Will gets ready to meet his match.

He gets through the rest of the week somehow, arranging a sitter for the dogs and scheduling his time off at work. He actually has a rather impressive amount of vacation and sick leave built up. The administrator tips him a wink as he turns in his leave request and wishes him good luck. He leaves in a hurry.

There is a distinctly uncomfortable moment when he asks Alana to cover a few of his classes and he has to explain why. As a beta, Alana can sympathize with him but can't empathize (and don't think he doesn't see the irony in that). What's worse is that he can see the thoughts running underneath her look of concern. *This could be good for you. Maybe having a mate will give you some stability. You need someone to take care of you.* It is hard not to feel resentful toward her. He knows she means well, but he has taken care of himself for this long and he doesn't think he is doing that bad. Maybe he is kind of reclusive and a borderline dog hoarder, but so what? He doesn't really see how binding himself to a stranger is going to somehow make his life better.

Monday comes far too quickly and he drives to Baltimore after getting absolutely no sleep and consuming nothing but half a cup of coffee. The meeting facility is set up slightly more tastefully than the office. In fact, it kind of looks like a nice hotel. He turns in his paperwork at the front desk and is led by a polite omega man in a white coat to a small exam room. He has Will undress and put on a white robe. After a standard physical, the man gives him a shot in the arm to rid his body of any lingering suppressants then explains how things are going to proceed.

"I'm going to let you into one of the rooms. It's fully furnished and has a stocked kitchenette. It's got everything you should need for the next week. You will have a little while before we send your alpha in. We strongly encourage you to use that time to nest as it will help move things along, but do what you need to feel comfortable."

As if there is anything in the world that could make me feel comfortable with this. Will thinks.

"Once your alpha is let in, it is fine if you want to take a little while to get to know each other, but it is really best to just let nature take its course."

Evolutionary, mating is an instinctive process. When an unmated omega and alpha come into close proximity they both start reflexively putting out pheromones. Depending on how genetically compatible they are, they will both begin exhibiting courting behaviour. The alpha will offer food to the omega and show off his or her physical prowess. If the omega is

receptive to the potential mate, they will build a nest and welcome the alpha with solicitous purring and preening. The alpha will then cover the omega in the nest and bite the back of their neck, releasing an enzyme through their saliva that will cause the omega to go into heat. That heat will trigger an answering rut in the alpha and they will knot.

Once the mating frenzy is over, the couple will spend several days nesting together to strengthen their new bond. The bite is really what differentiates a mating from just sex. The exchange of hormones creates the mating bond which can only be broken through death or extremely prolonged separation. It also increases the likelihood of reproduction. Mated couples are far more fertile than their single counterparts.

Will knows all of this, as anyone who paid attention in middle school health does. He also knows that humans are perfectly capable of ignoring or overriding biological urges. And yet, here he is being told to roll over and think of England.

“We will check in after the first twelve hours to make sure a mating bite has occurred, then you will be left alone for the remainder of the week.”

“What if there hasn’t been a bite by then?” Will has to ask.

The man hesitates. “Then we’ll have to give you two something to *encourage* the process. But I’m sure once you two meet that won’t be necessary.”

Great so it was fuck or be drugged. God Bless America.

Will doesn’t say anything as he is taken to the mating room. He sits stiffly on the end of the kingsized bed, because there is no way in hell he is going to make a nest. He folds his arms, wrapping the robe tightly around himself in a rather poor defense of what is to come.

Looking around the room, it’s just as the man had said. There’s a bowl of fruit on the counter of the kitchenette. A pile of extra bedding is stacked next to the long air conditioner/heater combo unit. On the bedside table there is an industrial sized bottle of water based lubricant. He wonders if it’s for omegas with performance issues or if it serves some other purpose. He decides he doesn’t want to know. There is a television mounted on the wall, but he doesn’t turn it on. *How many other couples have used this room?* He quickly stops that line of thought, deciding he *really, really* doesn’t want to know.

He considers taking a shower just for something to do, but he had already had one before he left the house. And he doesn’t want to look like he was preparing himself for the alpha. Which he admits is kind of a ridiculous thought considering what he is there for. It feels like his stomach has turned into a stone and sunk to the bottom of his torso. There aren’t any windows in the room through which he can escape. He thinks he might be trembling. Sweat gathers on his palms, but he feels cold. Maybe he will take that shower, maybe he could pick the lock on the door, maybe he could bash his head into the wall, maybe…

The door opens.

Mated

Chapter Summary

Pretty much says it in the title.

Chapter Notes

I decided to go ahead and post chapters two and three today because I know you all are eager to see Will meet Hannibal. Enjoy the smut.

The thing about pheromones is that they don't actually have a scent per se. Smell is just the closest sense word for their effect. What they actually did was invoke hormonal responses in those who pick up on them. Most of the time a person wouldn't even realize they were being manipulated by biology into feeling a certain way. Even with his situational awareness, Will cannot help but be bowled over by the presence of the man in the doorway.

The alpha is soft grass under bare feet, the sensation of holding a wiggling puppy, biting into a crisp apple. He is the soft lapping of water against a boat and the dotting of stars in the sky. Every good memory and all of Will's favorite things stuffed into a powerfully built package that he really wants to feel pressing against him.

Well shit the part of his brain that hasn't regressed thought.

The door shuts behind the alpha and he hears the distinct click of the lock in the silent room. The two stare at each other as if held spellbound. The alpha takes a step toward him, and Will sways toward him without thinking. The man reaches out toward his face when Will abruptly gets ahold of himself and scurries backward off the opposite side of the bed. He tries not to breathe through his nose. It doesn't help much.

"Um. Hello?" He asks tentatively. The sound of his voice seems to help the other man recover himself marginally.

"Pardon me. I am a bit...overcome. I did not expect to be so affected by your presence."

Oh damn, that voice. Will feels slick start to trickle down his leg.

"Yeah. Same. I'm Will, uh, Will Graham."

“Hannibal Lecter. It is nice to meet you.” How the man is managing to look so comfortable wearing nothing but a cheap bathrobe in front of a stranger is beyond Will. Much to his embarrassment, he finds that he is clutching the lapels of his own robe like he is a Victorian Romance protagonist who was just caught bathing. He hastily drops his hands, but is then unsure what to do with them, leaving them hanging awkwardly at his sides. Rational thought is quickly slipping away.

Hannibal prowls around the bed toward him, and that really is the only word for it. Will watches wide eyed at the play of muscles under the thin robe. He swallows hard and realizes the man has effectively pinned him into the corner of the room. A large portion of his mind suggests that he could pin him some other places, too. He physically shakes his head to rid himself of that thought. Hannibal stops just a foot shy of him.

“Will.” He leans toward him, inhaling deeply. He is close enough, Will can see his pupils dilate. Will shivers, his back hitting the wall.

“I-I..” God, what did he want to say? Why is he still talking when he has a big, viral alpha courting him? He is somewhat surprised to find that his hands are on the upper arms of the other man, feeling the muscles there. Hannibal’s mouth is on his neck, which, wow, feels amazing, but his hindbrain is telling him it’s too early for that. He pushes hard against the alpha’s chest, forcing him to take a step back.

Eyes follow him hungrily as he climbs on the bed and begins arranging the covers. Hannibal tries to reach for him again, but Will growls warningly at him. The alpha paces around the border of the bed as Will makes the nest, fussing over the pillow placement. He reaches over to grab some of the extra blankets and has to snarl again as Hannibal tries to touch him. He *isn’t ready yet* . He undoes the robe and tosses it to the side, baring his flushed body. Rolling in the nest, he imprints the scent of his arousal into the covers. Satisfied, he turns on his side and looks Hannibal through heavy lidded eyes.

The alpha takes a step forward, pulling off his own robe as he does so revealing his heavy arousal. A purr builds in Will’s throat at the sight. This alpha will give him many strong pups. He rolls onto front, lifting his ass into the air and parting his knees to show his readiness, and Hannibal is on him.

Hands slide under his hips to lift him higher. A hot chest presses against his back. He purrs louder, the sound mixing with his moan at the feel of teeth nipping the back of his neck. His head bows forward, encouraging. There is a sharp pain, but he is too lost in endorphins to mind. He whines, pressing back against his alpha as his need becomes more urgent. He can feel his insides contract with want.

Unclamping his jaw, Hannibal licks the wound soothingly before pressing the omega’s shoulders to the bed. His spine curves beautifully, presenting his aching hole to his new mate. Hannibal presses his head in, groaning at the tight heat. He is so slick that he slips in easily, a thick slide all the way to the base. The pace he sets is brutal and exactly what they both need. Will’s throaty sounds of encouragement driving him on. Will grabs his own stiff cock and lets the alpha’s thrusts push it through his fist. He needs, needs, needs.

Hannibal's rhythm falters, and he wraps an arm around Will's waist, pulling him up then down, hard onto his cock as his knot expands, forcing it past his rim. Will's head tosses and he cries out as he comes, his sterile semen spilling and insides clamping down to milk the alpha's knot. He's held tight as they ride through the climax together.

Will, wrung out from his orgasm goes limp in Hannibal's arms. Still tied together, the alpha carefully maneuvers them into a comfortable position in the nest. Bodies intertwining, the two new mates drift into a deep, sated sleep.

Will snaps awake at the sound of a knock on the door. He growls in that direction and feels the tension of Hannibal behind him. The door opens and two people enter, speaking softly. Will can't seem to make his mind grasp what they are saying, though he knows the words. Hannibal pulls him beneath him and growls at the strangers encroaching on their nest. The smaller of the two, an omega holds her hands up, and slides forward slowly. Will snarls when she gets within arms distance of the nest. She freezes. She says something else, making soothing noises. She touches the back of her neck, then gestures at Will. He narrows his eyes at her. She does it again. She wants to see his mark? He doesn't want to take his eyes off of them. He growls, and burrows further under Hannibal.

The larger one, a beta man, moves forward aggressively. Hannibal jerks, but does not want to leave Will uncovered to strike at the man. The small woman backs up, putting herself in front of the man, still making soothing noises. She turns, lifting her hair up, and shows Will the back of her neck. There is a white scar there. A show of trust. He considers. His alpha's weight on top of him is reassuring. He turns his head away briefly, letting them see the mark. They back out quickly after that, shutting the door behind them. Hannibal springs up, doing a patrol of the room, making sure it's secure. Will watches languidly from the bed, curling into the warm spot left behind and eventually dozes back off.

When he wakes up again, his head is significantly clearer and he is ravenously hungry. Sitting up, he finds he is alone in the nest. Hannibal is standing in the kitchenette, robe back on. The smell and sound emanating from the area indicate he is frying bacon.

In a moment of belated modesty, Will wraps a sheet around himself. Hannibal turns around.

"Good morning, Will."

"Is it morning?" He glances at the clock. The glowing face declares it to be 9:30am the day after he had arrived.

"Indeed." Hannibal politely averts his eyes, playing by locker room rules so Will can get up and go to the bathroom. While in there, Will decides to go ahead and take a shower. A small part of him whines that will wash off his alpha's scent and he viciously shuts that part down. He touches the bonding bite on the back of his neck. It's slightly sore, but seems to have scabbed over. The significance of it sits as a heavier weight in the pit of his stomach. Mated to a stranger. At least he isn't the only one in this boat. He wraps himself in a clean robe hanging on the back of the door. Time to find out what his new spouse thinks about their arrangement.

The alpha has set two places at the small breakfast nook off of the kitchenette. To Will surprise, the man has done a full place setting and plated a breakfast of omelets, bacon, and fresh fruit so nice that Will almost thinks it was a shame to ruin it. His stomach loudly disagrees.

“This looks great. Are you a chef?” Will slides onto one of the short bench seats.

“Not by trade, but by passion. I enjoy cooking and am very careful about what I put in my body. The ingredients provided by the agency are not quite up to the quality I prefer, but I made do.” Hannibal sits gracefully, his legs just brushing Will’s under the small table.

Will forks up a bite of the omelette. It tastes amazing to him, so he isn’t sure what Hannibal is complaining about. They eat in a comfortable silence. Mating takes a lot of energy so their bodies were demanding fuel. After he has decimated his food, Will takes his plate and begins to wash the few dishes. Hannibal takes up drying without saying anything and once done, they both sit back at the table with cups of coffee. There is a palpable shift in the air.

“I should probably tell you that I wasn’t exactly thrilled to hear I had been matched up.” Will started off.

“I was hesitant myself. I consider myself something of a private person and have never felt anything lacking in my life by remaining unmated.”

“So you haven’t been mated before?”

“No. I was an immigrant to this country, though I now have citizenship status. A new law has recently passed requiring unmated alphas and omegas who have immigrated to register with the agency where we previously did not have to. I completed my profile about two weeks ago and here we are.”

“I’ve been in the system for five years and you are the first match I’ve had.”

Hannibal lifts an eyebrow. “I have heard that can occasionally happen. But it is not as unprecedented as the strength of our match.”

“Well, I’m not really sure what that means other than we could have a healthy baby.” Will hesitated. “I’m currently on birth control. I mean, I don’t really have the best lifestyle to take care of a child.”

“I have never particularly considered having children, myself. I am glad for your forethought.”

Will shrugged one shoulder, looking down into his coffee cup. He isn’t quite sure where to proceed from here. What do you ask to a person whose teeth were imprinted in your skin? ‘I really liked how you felt inside me earlier’ doesn’t seem appropriate.

“So...tell me about yourself?” He attempts, wishing he could drum up some more enthusiasm.

Hannibal doesn’t seem to mind, the corner of his mouth turning up. “May I suggest an exchange of information? Quid pro quo, if you will. Getting to know each other is why we

were given this time, after all."

Will considers this. Seems reasonable enough, and it's not like he has a better idea.

"Ok. What do you want to know?"

One Week

Chapter Summary

An arrangement is made.

Conversation comes a little easier as they trade the basic facts of their lives.

Will learns that Hannibal lives and works in Baltimore. He is a former surgeon and current psychiatrist (and isn't that a laugh). Originally from Lithuania, he has also lived in France and Italy. He speaks multiple languages and is a patron of the arts. Though never explicitly stated, Will has made a career of reading between the lines and can tell that the alpha is extremely well off financially.

Will, in turn, tells Hannibal about his stint as a homicide detective with the NOPD, and his current position as a professor at Quantico. He may also enthuse a little too much about his dogs. He finds himself slightly embarrassed by how boring his life seems compared to Hannibal's full social schedule. When Will isn't working he tends toward more solitary pursuits.

The do manage to find some common ground (that isn't hormonally induced) discussing books. Hannibal had a slight advantage on him when it comes to reading classics in their original language, but he has several suggestions for good translations. It isn't surprising that they both also have rather extensive knowledge of psychological texts considering their respective careers.

They manage a lively debate on author bias in the current psychological journals. To Will's surprise, he feels completely at ease conversing with Hannibal. It tends to be difficult for him to spend extended periods of time with others. He will start to pick up on their little ticks that betray their inner thoughts. It wears on a person to be constantly bombarded by the emotions of others. Will is a recluse by necessity, it gives him a chance to come back to himself instead of being a fractured reflection of everyone else. But with Hannibal, it is easy. He is like looking at a smooth pond. He knows there is something moving beneath the surface, but nothing is shown on the still waters of his expression. Perhaps it is just the hormones still coursing through his system promoting their bonding that is affecting ins so called 'gift'.

Those same hormones that eventually urge them back to bed. The amount of sex they end up having over the rest of the week is astounding when Will thinks back on it. Much of it is a blur of adrenaline and instinctive behaviour with periods of moderate lucidity when they eat or talk. To be fair, there also isn't a lot to do in the small room they are stuck in for a week. One could only talk so much, and neither are particularly interested in watching television, so…

It is expected anyway for new mates, that's why they are sequestered for so long. Their bodies are demanding it; instincts driving them to conceive a child. Will's back starts to ache from being bent over to take Hannibal's knot. He takes the alpha by surprise and flips him onto his back, riding him hard, nails digging into his chest. A provocative growl rolls out of Hannibal's throat and he grips his hips tightly, probably leaving bruises, but the thought of being marked further by his alpha is pleasing to his current state of mind. He purrs and bears down, working his inner muscles to squeeze his mate's member tight. Hannibal's knot inflates, Hannibal thrusts up as Will pushes down, locking them together. Their combined cries of pleasure echo off the neutral beige walls.

All in all he has more sex during the week than he has had in the last fifteen years put together, which probably says something unflattering about his personal life. He does have to admit they fit well together. Never before has he felt so sexually satisfied by a lover, though he thinks it is probably a benefit of their high match number.

The topic of the future isn't brought up until their last day. Hannibal pulls out of him and Will is wondering in the afterglow if his dogs are missing him when Hannibal broaches the subject.

"It seems prudent to discuss our actions when our time here is done."

Will fights the impulse to groan and bury his face in a pillow. "Yeah, that's something that needs to happen." He sits up, propping some pillows behind his back. This isn't the kind of conversation one has while lying down. Unfortunately this action has the unpleasant side effect of causing semen to seep out of his ass. He valiantly ignores this.

"I'm know you didn't volunteer to be matched up with a mate, but I bet you weren't expecting one with six pieces of furry baggage either."

"I have nothing against dogs, but I am not well equipped to deal with them, I fear. I doubt you are eager to attend meetings with the Baltimore Opera association with me, am I correct?"

"Yes, it doesn't really sound like my scene."

"I wonder if you might be amenable to an *arrangement* then, one that would allow us to continue our individual lives without much further disruption."

"The way you say arrangement makes me feel like the omega in a trashy romance novel, but I think I take your meaning. You want to stick to the letter of the law, but not the spirit?"

"Indeed. The law says we must mate, but from my perspective, we are the ones who define what our relationship is after that. If I might be so bold, I suggest that we spend our respective *times of the year* together. We can reap the benefits of having a mate without the inconvenience."

"That sounds fine to me. I'm, uh, fairly regular. Every three months, two to three days."

“We can exchange contact information upon our departure, which, if I am not mistaken will be within the next few hours.”

Will glances at the clock. It is the early hours of Saturday morning, almost five days since he was brought to the room. It feels simultaneously like an eternity and no time at all. By tacit mutual agreement, they clean up as best they can in the room, stripping the rather disgusting bedding and taking separate showers. They are wrapped in their robes sharing a last cup of coffee when there is a knock at the door and a man and woman tentatively make their way in carrying their clothes. They look vaguely familiar to Will but he cannot place them. They seem relieved to find them ready to go.

The two new mates dress quickly. They have to stop and fill out the paperwork needed to stoke the fires of bureaucracy. Hannibal gives him a card with his personal number and address embossed in elegant script on heavy cream coloured paper. Will gives Hannibal a post-it with his contact information hastily scrawled with a ballpoint pen. And they part ways.

Will muses while he sits in the Baltimore traffic on his way back home that he has somehow come out of this whole mating ordeal with one of the best possible solutions. As Hannibal said, all the benefits of a mate without any of the inconvenience. A pessimistic voice at the back of his head insisted that this was just a little too easy. It’s just a matter of time before the other shoe drops.

We Meet Again

Chapter Summary

Will gets sucked into Jack Crawford's bullshit and season 1 begins.

But over the next three years, that shoe never comes. Hannibal and Will meet a total of twelve times. Will's heat and Hannibal's rut sync up damn near perfectly, so like clockwork every three months when one or the other feels it coming on they (usually Hannibal) make arrangements at a discreet and comfortable hotel to spend a few days letting the inner animal out. The arrangement seems to work out well for both of them.

And things are fine. Will works and fishes. He takes long walks with his dogs and works on lures and boat motors. He fends off Alana when she gets that concerned look that means she thinks he is getting taken advantage of by his absent mate. He only tells her the bare minimum about his relationship with Hannibal. He doesn't even tell her his name, just that what they have suits them both. Life goes on more or less normally.

Then Jack Crawford walks into his lecture hall, and despite all good sense telling him otherwise, he goes to Minnesota and finds a dead girl tucked into bed.

It's difficult, he won't lie. There is a reason he stopped working homicide, and getting stabbed was really the least of it. He does not enjoy looking into the minds of killers, and it does something to him. Others don't understand how that darkness sticks to him. Like soaking up ink with a sponge, you can wring it out all you want but there will always be traces of black left in the sponge.

Price, Zeller, and Katz flitting around just add to his headache. He appreciates Beverly and her honest, good natured curiosity, but being around so many people is wearing on him, especially when he is split between the killer and himself. But the forensic team is very good at their job, and he knows it will take all of them to catch the guy.

What he does not appreciate is Jack's attitude. He is not a damn wizard. He can't pull answers out of his ass just because Jack yells at him. He has to stop and take several deep breaths after that encounter in the restroom. He feels sorry for the poor agent sent to the ladies.

His annoyance grows even further not long after that. He was under the impression that Jack was also good at his job. How could he be the head of the BAU otherwise? This assumption is severely tested when the man doesn't even bother to look at Will's personnel file to see that his registered mate's name is Dr. Hannibal Lecter.

No, instead he brings Will's mate to be the psychiatrist that keeps him on a leash. Because he is apparently too unstable to function in the field without a crutch. Will can't decide if he is more personally or professionally insulted as he sits in the uncomfortably angled chair in Jack's office next to his mate-with-benefits.

Hannibal is inscrutable as always, somehow managing to both lounge comfortably and keep perfect posture. Will isn't sure, but he suspects that the alpha is amused by Jack's blunder. The man in question, practical and quick thinking as he is decides to utilize Hannibal's professional skills in regards to the case. They trade theories, studiously ignoring the elephant in the room. Will finds himself impressed by many of Hannibal's insights. He has picked up the vague idea that Hannibal must be well respected within the psychiatric community, but then again so is Frederick Chilton and he's a pompous idiot.

However, Hannibal's read of Elise Nichol's crime scene allows Will to better understand this killer. He sinks into his own mind, turning evidence over and piecing it back together. The murderer is... respectful. He loves the girls, but not crudely, no. Like a daughter. That was it, that's the key. A daughter. A young brunette woman, probably leaving for college soon. And he can't stand to lose her, so he is trying to consume her instead.

Will's watch alarm goes off, and he shakes his head to find he is still sitting in Jack's office the two alpha's watching him intently. His ears burn. He clears his throat, and excuses himself to go teach his class. Hannibal offers to accompany him. With no real reason to refuse him, Will nods sharply.

The doctor waits until they are out of sight of Jack's office before speaking.

"I would apologize Will, but I fear I will soon have to repeat myself. I truly did not know it was you whom Agent Crawford wanted my analysis of. He simply referred to a gifted profiler. I should have suspected."

"It's not your fault. I don't usually work in the field and for good reason. Though, if you don't mind, why did he ask you? You've never mentioned working with the FBI before."

"I have not had the privilege. Apparently Dr. Alana Bloom recommended my services."

"You know Alana?"

"I was her mentor at John Hopkins."

"Huh, small world. I wonder why she has never mentioned you before."

"What is your usual reaction when someone mentions a psychiatrist to you?" Hannibal smiles slightly.

Will makes a face. "Point taken."

"I could wonder the same about you."

"About why she never mentions me? I can guess. She wants people to leave me alone. My 'gift' as some people call it seems to be endlessly fascinating to those in your field. I'm not

really interested in becoming a research subject and having my psyche dissected and she is one of the few who respects that."

"She is your friend."

"One of the few I have."

"I have always believed in quality over quantity. Alana is certainly a person of the highest caliber. I enjoy counting her among my friends, also."

They arrive at Will's classroom, and he lingers there, strangely reluctant to part ways. He has found himself once again falling in that easy conversation with Hannibal. Students look at the curiously as they file past into the lecture hall. They'll be the talk of the academy by the end of the day.

"Until next time, Will." Hannibal touches his shoulder gently before walking off. Will tells himself that it is just a figment of his imagination that he could feel the phantom touch the rest of the day.

Minnesota

Chapter Summary

The boys set out to catch a Shrike.

Chapter Notes

I'm glad everyone seems to be enjoying the fic so far. I've gotten some super nice comments :) Have another chapter.

Will groggily opens the door to his cheap motel room in Minnesota to find Hannibal standing there looking far too awake and chipper.

“You’re here to feed me aren’t you.” Hannibal always shows up to their quarterly rendezvous toting enough gourmet food to make Julia Child blush. Not that Will is complaining because it is always fantastic and their activities during those times took a lot of energy.

“It seems I have become predictable.” Will stands back to let him in.

“Only about food. I didn’t know Jack invited you along.”

“A last minute addition, I believe. Alana could not make it.” They sit down at the little table, reminiscent of the first meal they shared together.

“It’s sort of offensive that Jack thinks I need a babysitter at all.”

“I believe Jack sees you as a fragile little teacup, only brought out for the finest guests.”

Will huffs a laugh. “Do I give out some air of vulnerability?”

“Not that I have ever noticed, but I suspect our interactions are much different than those you have with others.”

Will grins crookedly. “No our...interactions tend to be much more rigorous. Usually.” Hannibal smiles back slightly in acknowledgement. Will’s sardonic tone becomes curious. “How do you see me?”

Hannibal pauses in contemplation, setting his fork down. “I must beg an extension on my answer to that question. As it is, you are continually surprising me.”

“My students would tell you that I don’t normally grant extensions, but I guess I can make an exception for you.”

“I will not squander the privilege then.”

They spend the morning digging through files at the construction site. Squinting at the lines of writing were making Will’s head pound. He dry swallows some aspirin as they drive to Garret Jacob Hobb’s house. A young, wind chafed brunette answers the door when he knocks. *I’ve got a golden ticket* he thinks with dark whimsy.

Then all hell breaks loose. When Hobbs sees them, he grabs a knife and his wife. Will’s gun barely clears it’s holster before he has the blade pressed to her throat.

“Put it down, or she dies.” Hobbs has the wild-eyed look of a trapped animal.

Will raises one hand, slowly putting down the gun, maintaining eye contact with Hobb’s. Which is why neither of them expect what happens next. Mrs. Hobbs brings her foot down hard on Garret’s instep, driving her elbow into his gut at the same time.

She grabs the wrist of the hand holding the knife and twists it, causing him to drop it. Then she snatches a skillet off the counter and swings it around catching him on the side of the head. He drops like a stone.

There is a moment of dead silence as everyone tries to process what just happened. Hannibal recovers first.

“I will call Agent Crawford, shall I?” Will shakes his stupor off.

“Yes. Thanks. I’ll... secure Hobbs I guess.” He puts his gun back in it’s holster but leaves it unbuttoned.

“Ladies, I am sorry to ask you this, but I need you to stay here in the kitchen. The FBI is going to want to take you in for questioning.”

Mrs. Hobbs puts her arm around her daughter who looks very pale and shaky, but not Will notes, surprised or confused.

He half expects to be bombarded with questions but the two women just huddle in grim silence. Their entire world has just collapsed beneath them and now they cling to each other to keep from falling.

Will and Hannibal exchange a look, and Hannibal stands in front of the door as Will cuffs Hobbs and zip ties his feet. The killer starts to come around. Will puts his hand on the butt of his gun. The man’s eyes are slightly unfocused, but he shakes it off to stare in despair at his daughter. His wife pulls the girl’s face into her shoulder and glares fiercely at him. The man seems to give up, shrinking into himself, gaze wandering to Will’s.

“See?” he whispers hoarsely before lying back and closing his eyes. There were sirens getting louder. Within a few minutes the house is flooded with police officers, and Jack comes in, all command and fiery justice.

It is a very, very long day after that, writing reports and retelling ad nauseum their every movement that day. Will has even more paperwork to do than Hannibal since he had pulled his weapon and 'apprehended' the suspect. Thankfully Jack doesn't need him to sit in on the questioning. Garret Jacob Hobbs confesses and gives directions to his hunting cabin where he had taken the girls. For all he had tried to take a hostage to escape, all the fight has gone out of him now. Jack does ask Will about that when he comes to give him an update.

"Guilty conscious?" he asks.

Will considers. "I don't think so. He killed those girls so he wouldn't kill his daughter. He loves her so much he wants to consume her. Now that she is completely out of his reach he knows she is safe from him, and some part of him, the non possessive part, wants that."

Jack nods thoughtfully. He lets Will know that he and Hannibal will be contacted later for the trial, but they are free to go home now. The FBI has booked him a ticket back to Virginia first thing in the morning.

Will spends what little remains of the night trying to sleep in his cheap motel room. But the scarce amount he manages is fraught with nightmares. He dreams of Hobbs tucking Abigail's pale, lifeless body into a bed of red sheets and caressing her face with a hand holding a knife. "See?" he whispers. He takes a very hot shower when he wakes up to wash away the traces of his cold sweat and doesn't manage to get back to sleep. Lying there in the dark, he can admit to himself that it might be nice to have someone next to him to help chase the nightmares away.

Hannibal meets him outside the motel at dawn the next morning with two to-go cups probably from some high end place. Will feels as if a heavy weight has been lift from his chest when he sees him, though he refuses to think that he had hoped the other man would show up. They ride to the airport together, where he finds out that Hannibal's flight is not for several hours.

"You didn't have to get up this early for me."

Hannibal glances over him, the corners of his lips twitching up. "I wanted to."

Will gives him a side eye as he shoulders his duffel bag. He isn't sure what to make of that. "Well, I'll see you around."

"Yes. Will-" Hannibal hesitates which is noteworthy enough to make Will pay attention. Limited though his contact with Hannibal may be, but he knows the man rarely shows any uncertainty.

"What is it?" The intercom announces that Will's flight is boarding.

"Have a pleasant trip." Whatever the other man wanted to say, he obviously changed his mind.

Girl Talk

Chapter Summary

Will and Alana have a chat.

Will feels much better back in Virginia. His dogs are ecstatic to see him, even his new addition Winston. Will had been a bit concerned at leaving him so soon after finding him. Strays are so hard to build trust with, but Winston seems to have bonded quickly. His relief at being home does not extend to his sleep, unfortunately. The little bit of sleep he manages is bombarded with horrible images of dead girls and antlers. He wakes in a cold sweat and has to stand under a scalding hot shower to wipe the chill from his bones.

So when he arrives at Quantico the following Monday, he feels like he has been drug down five miles of bad road. His head, in particular, is pounding. The applause from his students didn't help. He is a bit abrupt with them. He tries to impress upon them that a good deal of police work involves luck, but he doesn't think the lesson sticks. He didn't really expect it to. It's something that is only learned through experience.

Alana shows up after his last class.

"I hear that you snared the Minnesota Shrike."

"Is that what they are calling Hobbs now?"

"Coined by Freddie Lounds. She snuck into his hunting cabin. It looks like he was hanging the girls on the antler racks. Pictures are all over the tabloids, and more than a few of the major news networks."

"That woman is a menace. I hope she didn't tamper with any evidence."

"I agree, but even if she did, I think there is still enough from Hobbs' house to put him away. Apparently they found pillows...made from remains."

"Use every part, otherwise it's a waste. It's how he honors them." Will says darkly.

Alana's eyes grow large and concerned. "How are you doing?"

"Fine." *If only I could sleep a whole night* , he silently added. "I'm glad we caught him before anyone else got hurt."

Alana smiles. "Thanks to you."

"Thanks to Susan Hobbs" he corrects. "She's the one who took him down."

“Yes, Hannibal told me. Apparently she used to teach self defense classes” Her expression turns shrewd. “Speaking of Hannibal-”

“Oh, look at the time.” Will hurriedly packs his things up. “I better go if I want to beat rush hour traffic.”

“Don’t think you can dodge this conversation forever, Will.” She calls after him as he almost runs out of the lecture hall.

She does eventually convince him to go out to lunch later the next week. He agrees because he hasn’t consumed anything but subpar coffee all day. The go to a little deli nearby the school. She waits to pounce until after they place their orders.

“I can’t believe you have been mated to Hannibal this whole time.”

“It never came up. It’s not like we spend a lot of time together.”

“Your *arrangement* .” She tries to hide it, but Will easily picks up the trace of disapproval in her tone.

“It is a mutual decision. It has worked fine for us for several years now.”

“It might benefit you both if-”

“Alana.” Will rubs his face tiredly. He probably looks a mess. His sleep was not getting any better. “I know you mean well, but our relationship, whatever you think of it, is ours to define.”

“I know, Will. I’m sorry if I come off as a busy body. But finding out two people I consider close friends are actually mated just blew me away!”

“We are a rather strange match.” Their sandwiches arrive. Alana waits until the server walks away to respond.

“Actually, once I had a chance to think about it, I’m surprised I haven’t introduced you to each other before.”

Will doesn’t look at her as he spreads mayonnaise on the sandwich. “I probably wouldn’t have reacted well to being introduced to another psychiatrist. No offense.”

“None taken. But while you two may superficially seem opposites, I think you have a lot in common.”

He looks up incredulously at that. “Like what? We don’t really move in the same circles.”

Alana looks thoughtful. “You are both very private people. While Hannibal does have a lot of social acquaintances, he tends to keep everyone at arm’s length. I think you two would be good for each other if you let yourselves get close to someone else. Maybe what you have does work for you, but would having more be so bad?”

Will doesn't say anything, just bites into his sandwich to avoid answering the question. Alana tactfully changes the subject.

"I've been working with the Hobb's women." She tells him, face falling somber.

He swallows. "How are they doing?"

"Holding up better than you would think. That Susan has got a core of steel."

"That's good. She is going to need it to deal with the media shitstorm."

Alana winces. "You're probably right. I've already had to chase Freddie Lounds away from the facility. If I see her again I'm going to look into getting a restraining order for them."

Will snorts. "I doubt it would work. That woman is like a rat. She can get into just about anywhere."

Alana sighs. "I'm worried about Abigail, though. She has hardly spoken since...well, since." She hesitates. "Do you think Jack's right? I mean... that she was helping her father?"

Will puts down his sandwich, appetite suddenly gone. "I think Abigail Hobbs is a survivor. And survivors do what they have to do. I don't know the details of her and her father's relationship, but I suspect that she knew something whether she was actively helping or not."

Alana nods looking crestfallen. "I'm not sure I know how to help her, Will." She confesses.

"If anyone can I'm sure it's you." He tries a reassuring smile. "She still has her mother."

"Yes." Alana cheers a little. "Maybe they can help each other heal."

"Do you think I could go see them?" He asks, suddenly struck by the idea.

"Maybe give it a little while for the shock to wear off. Wouldn't want you to trigger them."

He nods, and they turn the conversation to lighter topics.

Kin and Killers

Chapter Summary

Will's not having a good time. He gets some advice.

He should have know. He should have fucking known that'd he would get sucked in if he went along with Jack's shit. It is never just one case. First he's elbow deep in mushroom covered corpses. Or almost corpses as the case may be. And fuck Freddie Lounds and her little expose questioning his mental fortitude. He'd like to see how she would react to being grabbed by a zombie. So what if he may have hallucinated Elise Nichols lying there before hand. That was...probably nothing. Sleep deprivation, maybe. His nightmares seem to get more and more intense every night to the point that he is intentionally staying up to avoid them. He is getting only a handful of hours every week. But he's getting by. He's fine. Everything is *fine* .

They catch Eldon Stammets loading up a woman into his soil filled car. Will's almost feels sorry for him. His empathy lets him understand, and, well, who doesn't long for connection? He's alway had trouble with it himself. But growing mushrooms on diabetics is more than a little too far.

The case after that, though, is rough. Those children, throwing away their families. It is actually one of the more difficult scenes to read. Children see the world in such a different way than adults, and he never had much of a family. He found it hard to peer out of their eyes. Alana is the one who fills in the missing piece. A mother. Now she is someone he can visualize. Embittered by her own failure to have a family, she creates one in the worst way. Stealing the boys away and making them bloodily cut ties.

He feels something twist inside of himself when he sees her put the gun against the boy's chest. He has never considered himself a particularly maternal person despite his reproductive capabilities, but in that moment he felt a fierce protectiveness rise in him. He wishes he had the clear to take the shot instead of Beverly. He easily pulls the gun from the boy's loose grip and picks him up, carrying him away from the bleeding body of his false mother.

He doesn't go to see any of the boys. It is still up in the air how the two who had killed their families were going to be tried. He does, however, go to see Abigail and Susan Hobbs. They have been relegated to a mental health facility for evaluation while Jack and forensics tries to figure out if either of them were involved with Hobbs' activities. Will is still fairly certain Abigail knew something, if not been involved in luring the girls. He is still unsure why he hasn't told Jack his suspicions. Maybe it was something in the way he watched the mother and daughter hold each other there in that kitchen. He doesn't want to do anything to jeopardize that bond.

Abigail's greeting is somewhat subdued, but at least she is talking now. Her mother, on the other hand, has a fire burning in her eyes. He admires this woman, greatly. She is not going to let anything or anyone break her or harm her daughter. He observes them together and gets that strange feeling again, but this one isn't so much protectiveness as it is...longing? He leaves the facility thinking about mothers and what makes someone a true one.

He never met his carrier. Shannon, the name on his birth certificate reads. A male omega, just like him. He had bonded with his father when they were both barely more than teenagers, then apparently decided the domestic life was not for him. Will's sire rarely ever spoke of his estranged mate. Occasionally as he got older, Will would catch him looking at him with a distant look in his eye as if Will's appearance was reminding him of times past. Will can only guess that he resembles his carrier. Well, except for his eyes which he sees reflected back at him in his father's face.

That reminds him, he should probably call his father. They hadn't spoken in a few weeks. The older Graham had retired to a small but comfortable fishing cabin in Sugarloaf, Florida where he still worked on boats in his spare time. Will was glad he had finally found a stopping place. He'd worried about him travelling around by himself in his old age. Though the man would heartily protest being called old. He knew that Will had a legal mate, but didn't pry into his business. He had faced enough criticism from other people for his own absent mate to question other people's life choices, for which Will was appreciative.

Now, though, Will could use some advice.

His father picks up the phone with a gruff "'Lo?"

"Hi, Dad."

"'Bout time you called, boy. I was starting to think you'd forgotten about me."

"Sorry, I should have called sooner. Work, you know." He winced at the terrible excuse, even if it is true.

"They not let their teachers have a break at the FBI?"

"Teachers, yes. Profilers, apparently not so much." He could practically hear his dad frown through the phone.

"When did you start profiling?"

"Uh, a month or so ago." Wow. Thinking back on it, he is surprised his dad hasn't called him first. It really has been a while. Time has been a little hazy for him lately due to the sleep deprivation.

"They finally make you an agent?"

"Special agent. It's basically the equivalent of an Old West deputization."

"Uh-huh, and who's the sheriff?" Some might look at Robert Graham's blue collar history and quiet manner and think him unintelligent. They would be very wrong. Will knew his

father didn't miss much. His attention to detail is a learned behavior.

"Jack Crawford, head of the Behavior Analysis Unit. Came to my classroom and asked for my help catching a killer."

"I'm gonna guess you did."

"Yep. But one turned to two, then three...and well, I forgot to call."

"Explains why you sound like you are about to fall over." His father's voice grows concerned, making him feel about eight years old. "Nightmares getting to you?"

When Will had been recuperating from his knife wound, his father had come and stayed with him. So he had gotten a front row seat to some of his worst bouts of night terrors. There isn't any use in lying to him.

"Yeah, but I'm handling it." His father's sigh is a rush of static over the line.

"No point in trying to talk you out of it. Once you get a notion in that fool head of yours, nearly impossible to get you to let it go."

"I'm helping save lives."

His father's voice is weary and unbearably kind. "Your own ain't worth less than anyone else's."

"I...I'll look into getting some help. Get some sleeping pills or something. That's not why I called anyway."

"You mean you didn't just miss my voice?" There is good humor in the question. "Let's hear it, then."

Will pauses, collecting his thoughts. Winston comes up, pushing his nose against his hand for petting. He absently scratchs him behind the ear.

"Do-Did you ever-" he stumbles, not wanting to bring up painful memories, but still needing to know. "Did you ever want more children than just me?"

The surprise from the other end is palpable. His father's answer comes slow and thoughtful. "I sometimes wish I could have given you a sibling. I worried that you felt too alone. But for myself? I think I had my hands full with you."

The next question comes out before Will even realizes he has formed it. "Do you want grandkids?"

This pause is significantly shorter. "Something you're trying to tell me there, son?"

"No! No, I'm not...no. I just have been...thinking about, you know, *that* , lately."

“Well, the choice is up to you. And one other person, I suppose. If you do decide to have some little ‘uns, I’ll love them. If not, I’m not gonna be disappointed or anything.”

“Maybe I’m just hearing my biological clock ticking a little loudly these days.”

“Don’t let it rush you into a decision you aren’t ready to make. It’s something you need to be sure about.”

“I know. Thanks, Dad.”

Someone Help Will Graham

Chapter Summary

Will's condition gets worse. He ignores it like an idiot.

Sleepwalking. That is...new. And worrying. Will feels like hell warmed over then frozen again. He's probably caught something horrible during his unconscious wandering. He doesn't have time to schedule a doctor's appointment because Jack has a new case. Because of course he does. Will has to admit, though, this is a weird one, even by their standards.

Angels. Will knows better than to admit it out loud, but he admires the construction. Then he lies in his bed and knows his fear. It lingers in him throughout the case. Echoing around his head, mixing with his own. He wakes up on the roof of his house. He thinks about angel wings. He begins avoiding sleep, staying up making lures until his hands cramp and his eyes dry out.

He snaps at Jack at the crime scene. It is unprofessional, he knows and he regrets that. But really? Jack had managed to catch plenty of killers before Will joined his team. He isn't some magic eight ball to be shaken until it gives the right answer.

Then they find Buddish. Strung up and flying with the angels.

Will tries to tell Jack what this is doing to him, but he doesn't want to hear it. He feels an overwhelming urge to hit something at Jack's smug 'Then quit.'. He turns away, and there is Buddish, falling down next to him, wings sagging. He grabs for his gun, staring into the knowing eyes of a dead man.

His voice is a rasping benediction. "I can fix you. Make you whole. Make you holy. I see…"

Will blinks and he is alone save for a corpse hanging in the rafters. He does not say anything to Jack on the ride back, focusing on keeping himself from trembling.

Will has always maintained that he knows what type of crazy he is. It is his private opinion that everyone is a little bit crazy, in their own way. He should know since he absorbs so much of it because of his goddamn empathy. But hallucinations, sleepwalking...these are not his type of crazy. He knows he needs to see someone about this.

But... well. There is a part of him. A very loud, insistent part that doesn't want to know. Because there is a chance the he has teetered over the edge into really crazy. Psychotic. He always thought that the craziest people don't think they are crazy, so where did that leave him? Severe denial for the most part, at least he can recognize that.

He lie in bed Sunday morning, too tired to move and too anxious to sleep. He listens to the birdsong and wind outside the house. His dogs grunt and shuffle in their sleep pile. He tries to immerse himself in the sensation of home. It should be soothing, but his head was spinning too much.

The phone rings, startling him. He fumbles for it, expecting Jack telling him they've found a body. To his surprise, it is Hannibal.

"Hello?"

"Will." The accented voice is like rich, hot coffee. He feels more alert, his senses coming a light.

"I hope this isn't a bad time."

"No, I wasn't doing anything." And isn't that depressingly true.

"Good." There is a pause, before he continues, somehow becoming even more polite. "Would you be amenable to meet at our usual retreat this evening? I can make the arrangements."

Will blinks, looking at his wall calendar. "Is it that time again?"

"I believe I have a few hours before I must succumb to my animal urges." He pauses again, then continues slightly concerned. "Not to be indelicate, but have you not felt any sign of your heat yet?"

Will is usually the one to contact Hannibal, as he usually begins feeling the preheat symptoms a day or so before it really hit.

"No, not yet."

"You have not started taking suppressants, have you?"

"No, it's probably just a fluke. I'll meet you this afternoon. I'll need to organize some stuff for the next few days."

"If you are sure, Will. I am capable of taking care of myself. I do not want you to feel obligated."

"It's fine. I'll be there."

"I will see you soon then." They hang up.

It's an effort to make himself get up and prepare. His head swims, and the mediocre coffee he makes in his old carafe doesn't help much. He calls his dog sitter and Quantico. Employers are legally required to give heat and rut leave, though many do so only grudgingly.

The hotel they meet at was chosen not only for its amenities, but also for it's location approximately halfway between their houses. Bleary eyed and shaky, sex is honestly the last thing on his mind, but he still gives Hannibal's name at the front desk and he is directed to

their usual room. Hannibal has not arrived yet, so he sits on the bed to wait, reminding him of their first meeting at the Match Mater's facility. His body feels heavy and he cannot resist laying down on the plush bedding. Soon enough his exhaustion overcomes him and he falls asleep.

He is wandering through a dense forest. No, not wandering. He is being led. There is a glowing light leaving a faint trail that he follows. He does not know the source of the light, it stays just far enough ahead that he cannot see it. He wants it. He must follow it, find out what it is. Around him in the darkened wilds, creep fearsome beasts. He can feel them. He knows they want to devour him whole, but he keeps his eyes on the light.

The forest thins out and he finds himself on the banks of a wide river, the water drifting lazily. The light hangs above the middle. Will can see now that it is a bright burning flame. He stands on the edge of the water. The flame suddenly descends, diving into the river. The entire river lights up, the glowing liquid spilling over the banks and illuminating the night.

Will steps into the luminescent water. It is warm. He feels no fear as he wades in. The water closes over the top of his head. He looks up as he floats away, surrounded by shining liquid. Above him he can see the shadows of the beasts of the forest, but they cannot reach him.

Care

Chapter Summary

Hanni is not happy with how poorly Will is caring for himself.

His eyes open to a dark room, with only the faint glow of moonlight peeking around the curtains. He stretches luxuriously and turns over. The body next to him shifts to cradle him close. Will's higher brain functions are gradually reasserted.

"Hannibal?" he mumbles.

"Awake this time?" Hannibal's voice is soft, as if he does not want to break the quiet of the room.

"Uh-huh." He considers sitting up, but he really does not want to pull away. "This time?"

"You have gotten up and walked about several times. I am relieved you did not try to leave the room. I was eventually able to coax you into the bed."

"Oh." Is what he says. *Oh shit* is what he thinks. He does sit up now, turning his head away from Hannibal to hide his fear and mortification. "I'm sorry, you shouldn't have to deal with my issues."

"You were no trouble, Will. Though I did not know you are afflicted with somnambulism."

"It's, uh, a recent development." He feels Hannibal sit up behind him. A light hand touches his shoulder, but he refuses to look. He notes that his shoes have been removed.

"Aren't you in rut?" Will asks gruffly. He can tell Hannibal is putting out pheromones, but they are more soothing than arousing.

"An alpha's rut will fade in the presence of a distressed mate."

"I'm not distressed." That may have come out a bit sharper than he intended.

Hannibal moves, rising off the bed and coming around to kneel in front of him. He places a hand on Will's face, frowning slightly as he studies him. Will tries to avoid his gaze.

"You are feverish."

"I guess I've felt a little under the weather." Wow, he should get his masters of understatement degree in the mail anyday now. Hannibal obviously isn't buying it either.

“Have you been having any other symptoms besides the fever and sleepwalking?” Hannibal’s tone turns somewhat clinical, though his hands still caress Will’s face tenderly, pushing his curls off his sweaty forehead.

“Um, maybe?” Will knows, objectively, that Hannibal used to be a surgeon and had to go through all the medical training that entails, but it is somewhat disconcerting to have that knowledge directed toward himself.

The thing is, Will hates doctors. Well, not doctors individually. Alana, arguably his best friend, is a doctor. It’s more that he hates the whole atmosphere of the health field, whether physical or mental. There are just too many bad experiences in his life associated with them. Which is another reason he has been putting off getting his...whatever...checked out.

But he is now stuck for three days-two and a half he amends, looking at the clock-with a man who is well versed in both bodily and mental healing. The horror.

Hannibal’s eyebrow quirks at his response. “Could you elaborate, please?”

Will squirms slightly. On the one hand, he doesn’t want to bother Hannibal with his fucked up mind. On the other, well...he trusts Hannibal. He does not really know him, not well, but his instincts chose this man to be his mate. His very presence calms him down. So if Will has to talk to someone about...his whatever...then Hannibal is really the best case scenario.

“Hallucinations.” He mumbles under his breath.

“I’m sorry, I did not quite catch that.”

Will sighs, and scrubs his hands over his face. “I’ve been having hallucinations. And night terrors, but that’s nothing new. Though they have been more intense lately.”

Hannibal frowns, and leans toward him. He puts his nose in Will’s curls and takes a deep, deliberate inhale. He stands up, holding a hand out to Will. He takes it, nonplussed, allowing himself to be led over to the small table area. Will sees that there is a large basket, likely containing whatever supplies Hannibal deems necessary for his culinary presentations. Now, though he pulls out a seat for Will then collects a small note pad and pen.

“This may seem like an odd request, but could you draw a clock for me? Just a standard analog face.”

“Ok…”

“With the current time, please.”

Will glances back at the digital clock on the bedside table, noting that is about 5:30 in the morning. He had slept for almost thirteen hours. Quickly, he draws the clock in the appropriate position. Hannibal takes the pad and studies his drawing for a moment.

“Will, when it reaches a slightly more appropriate hour, I am going to call an old associate of mine and schedule you for an MRI as soon as possible. Hopefully within the next few days.”

Will startles, slightly defensively he asks, “Why?”

“I believe you have encephalitis.”

“ *What?* ”

“I can smell it on you, a fevered sweetness. Even for an alpha, I have a particularly sensitive nose, and I learned to recognize such things when I worked in the emergency room.”

Will slumps in the chair, too stunned to form words.

“It is a serious condition, but very treatable. You will have to take some time from work.”

Will snorts, “Oh, Jack’s going to love that.”

Hannibal takes a seat next to him, his lips pursing. “Jack should not have been pushing you so hard when you are obviously unwell.”

“He can be pretty single minded on a case.”

Hannibal simply looks at him, he seems to be considering how to best phrase his next question.

“Why did you not seek medical assistance?”

Will looks down at the table, rubbing his damp palms against his jeans. “I don’t know. I thought I could handle it.”

“There is no shame in asking for help, Will.”

“I know.” He is starting to get agitated. “Look, I’m sorry I ruined our-arrangement-with my shit. I can go home and make an appointment for myself later. You don’t need to go to any trouble.”

“William.” His voice does not rise, but his eyes flash dangerously. Will’s inner omega feels a little thrill. “I have told you before that you are no trouble. I want to help you, not only as a doctor, but as your mate.”

Will forces himself to look at him, to meet his eyes. They are dark and fathomless in the shadowed room, but there is nothing but concern and sincerity in them. Will finds himself nodding.

“Okay.”

“You will allow me to care for you?”

“Yes.”

“Good. Now, how about some breakfast?”

Hospital Visits

Chapter Summary

Will gets treatment.

At 8am sharp, Hannibal is on the phone with a Dr. Sutcliffe. A fortuitous cancellation gets him an appointment for that evening. In the intervening time, he gets Will wrapped up in an incredibly soft blanket, reclining on the bed. He is fed bites of fruit and finger sandwiches in between sips of some herbal tea. Will can feel himself blushing furiously. Even under duress, he will never divulge how much he enjoys Hannibal pampering him the rest of the day. Everytime he tries to protest at being handled with kid gloves, Hannibal gently shuts him down. The man obviously earned the ink on his degree.

Before they leave, Hannibal coaxes him into the shower and massages the tension out of his neck and shoulders. Will allows himself to be held close against the alpha. *His alpha* something in him whispers insistently. He hates being so vulnerable, but is secretly grateful to have someone to lean on. It has been so long since he let himself be dependant on another person.

Hannibal insists on driving him to the appointment, saying they can pick up Will's car after. Once at the hospital, it becomes immediately clear that being with Hannibal affords him the VIP treatment. He has nearly no wait time at all before he is being ushered into a paper gown and taken to the MRI room. He drifts away a bit during the procedure, preferring to imagine himself fishing rather than lying in a coffin-like machine. He opens his eyes once he has been retracted and sits up, swinging his legs over the edge of the gurney.

A nurse leads him to a tastefully cluttered office, where Hannibal and Dr. Sutcliffe are waiting for him. On a wide computer screen, the neurologist shows him the inflamed areas on his brain, confirming Hannibal's unofficial diagnosis. He's reassured that the condition, while serious, is very treatable with anti virals, though several other tests will have to be run to determine the initial cause. Dr. Sutcliffe hands him off to a Dr. Vamerez, a no nonsense beta woman who will oversee his treatment and recovery.

They allow him to go home and collect a few items (though he has to ask Alana and Hannibal to go collect his car since the doctors pronounced his motor skills too compromised to drive). He gives a thorough goodbye to his dogs. Alana agrees to take them while he is in the hospital. She also volunteers to let Jack know he is indisposed. She says this with such a fierce look on her face, that he almost pities the man. Alana has never been afraid to go toe to toe with the older alpha. He makes his arrangements with Quantico, calling up some old favors to get some guest lecturers to cover his classes.

After he officially checks into the hospital, things morph into a pattern of waiting interspersed with flurries of activities. For the most part, being in the hospital is boring. Mostly he's just lying around waiting for the next round of invasive procedures. He gets stuck with far too many needles, either taking stuff out or putting stuff in. They schedule a biopsy of one of his ovaries, as the MRI showed a growth that is the probably cause of his infection. He brings up his skipped heat to Dr Vamerez, and she nods sagely.

"That's definitely a good indicator that this is where the infection originates. Of course, it could also be a response to stress."

He nods, the cheap pillowcase wrinkling under his head. "What are the chances of me spontaneously going into heat while I'm here?"

"Well, your hormone levels are very low right now, so there's not high chance. If we see any sudden spikes, we'll have to suppress it to give your body a chance to heal. But the anti virals we have you on right now often have a suppressing side effect anyway, so I wouldn't worry too much about it."

He hesitates, not sure if he wants to know the answer to the next question. Unsure why he even wants to ask it. "Will this affect my ability to have children?"

Her answer is professional, for which he is grateful. "Assuming we are able to successfully remove the growth and there are no other complications, I see no reason why the infection should inhibit your ability to conceive. Even if we have to remove the entire ovary, which there is no indication we will have to," she adds quickly, "you still have one other perfectly healthy ovary."

A tightness in his chest releases that he hadn't even realized was there. Being laid up is giving him far too much time to think. He's beginning to question his life decisions. Sure he has idly considered in the past having children, he thinks he'd be a good father, but the idea of having that choice taken away is making him realize how much he might want that.

Much to his amazement, he gets a string of visitors. Alana, of course, comes frequently, bearing books and crosswords as well as amusing stories about the pack. Beverly comes by fairly often, too, full of good cheer and slightly more morbid sense of humor. He's worked with enough forensic labs to know that's par for the course. His father calls him on the phone almost everyday, and Will has to practically beg him not to come up. There is no reason for him to travel just to see him lying around.

To his surprise he gets a visit from Zeller and Price. He always thinks of them like that, a pair. Even though Zeller is mated to a female omega Will's never met, and Price is something of a serial monogamist. They bring him a stuffed dog holding a 'Get Well Soon!" balloon. Will kind of suspects it is meant for a child, but he appreciates the thought. They spend most of the time bickering with each other rather than talking to him, but he doesn't mind. While they are on their way out, Brian lingers at the doorway, waving Jimmy on.

Will raises his eyebrows. "Got something to get off your chest?"

Zeller's brow furrows. "Why would you think that?"

“You’ve got…” Will waves a hand. They have him on something that’s making him a little loopy. “A look.”

“A look?”

“Yeah.”

Zeller looks at him hesitantly. “I’d heard of you, before we started working together. They said that you were a great detective, solved cases with just one look at a crime scene, but you were too crazy to make it in the FBI. Some think you’re psychic or something.”

Will leans back, feeling tired. “Yeah, I know what they say about me. Even if I’m not exactly friendly with the agents, I still have ears.”

The other man looks a bit shamefaced. “So when I hear that Jack’s brought you in, I think at best, you’re a fraud and at worst, a psycho. And then I see you do...that thing you do, and you’re *right* . Which is infuriating, ‘cause I can’t see where you’re pulling some of this shit from. And you’re, well, kind of creepy, like that thing with Elise Nichols, right before we found out she had liver cancer? And I guess I thought that the reason that you are so good at thinking like insane people is because-”

“I’m insane.” Will finishes for him. Something has just clicked in his mind. “Been talking to Freddie Lounds lately?”

He shakes his head adamantly. “That was a mistake. I didn’t know she was a journalist, and I was kind of drunk.”

Will silently pities Zeller’s unnamed mate. “I can think like anyone. That’s what empathy is. I just happen to have overly active mirror neurons. And an near compulsive need to catalogue minor details.” The empathy thing always caused so much discussion, really most of his actual detective work came from close analysis of the crime scene.

Zeller is frowning thoughtfully now. “I still don’t really understand how you do it, but I can’t deny that it works.”

Will sighs, he’s gotten use to people not understanding. “Is there a point to all this?”

“Oh, yeah. Well, I just wanted to say I’m sorry. I’ve kind of acted like a dick to you and you didn’t really deserve that.”

“It’s fine. I know I’m not the friendliest person.”

“Still, you’ve never done anything to me, and you’ve always been professional. Except when you yelled at Jack that one time. Though that was kind of awesome.”

Will actually manages a small smile at that. “I’m blaming that one on the brain infection.”

Zeller chuckles. “So, yeah. That’s all that I wanted to say. Actually more than I wanted to say, so get well soon, alright?”

He leaves quickly, both of them relieved to be done with the awkward conversation.

Bella

Chapter Summary

Will has a talk with a different Crawford.

Jack eventually comes by. Will has been expecting him. What he has not been expecting is for him to bring his wife. He recognizes her from the picture Jack keeps on his desk, though she is a little older and little more tired, she is still lovely.

“Jack took me to an appointment here, and I told him we might as well stop by. I think he has been putting off visiting you.” She throws her husband a mock scolding look. He smiles back at her, and the soft, loving look on his face is so different than the Jack he knows. He almost feels like he is intruding on a private moment.

He knows that she has been diagnosed with lung cancer. Jack had told him in a quiet moment after the Angel Maker case. They had sat in silence for close to an hour before he made the rough confession. Whatever issues Will has with Jack, he knows he is fundamentally a good man trying to do the right thing. It’s why he continues to work with him. He watches the Crawfords gaze at each other and hopes that they will be able to continue to do so for many years to come.

“Things been busy?” Will asks. His boredom has reached the point where he would rather look at some gruesome murder pictures than continue to watch brainless television or do another crossword.

Jack hesitates, obviously wanting to discuss something, but showing some rare circumspection. “Nothing you need to concern yourself with while ill.”

“So something has happened?”

Jack glances at Bella, who raises an eyebrow at him. Will isn’t sure what that signifies, but he seems to take it as permission to continue. “Abel Gideon is claiming to be the Chesapeake Ripper.”

It takes Will a split second to remember who Abel Gideon is. “The surgeon who killed his family on Thanksgiving?”

“That’s the one.”

Will snorts. “He could claim to be Jack the Ripper and I would believe that more.”

“He has details of the cases. And he killed a nurse in a Ripper like manner. It matches the Wound Man near perfectly.”

“He might have details, but that doesn’t make him the Ripper. Is there anyone with access to both Gideon and the case files?”

Jack doesn’t say anything, but there is a look in his eyes that shows he’s considering Will’s words. Bella smiles and shakes her head slightly.

“If you need to go chase down some lead, go ahead. I think we can take care of ourselves here.”

Jack turns toward her. “Are you sure?”

“Yes. I’ll take a cab home. Go on. You’ll be useless until you look into this.”

He kisses the top of her head. “You know me well.” He turns to Will, clears his throat. “Hope you feel better soon.”

“Thanks.” Will says for lack of anything better.

Jack clears his throat again, nods sharply and leaves.

“He’s never been good at apologizing.” Bella says to him.

“Somehow that doesn’t surprise me.”

“How are you doing?” she asks, eyes concerned. It makes Will feel a bit guilty, she is far sicker than he is.

“Better, they tell me I’m responding well to the medications. The headaches have mostly gone away.”

“That’s good.”

“And-how are you?” he asks carefully, not wanting to overstep with this woman he just met.

“I’m...coping.” She says on a sigh. “I wasn’t, for a while, but I’ve made the decision to fight and I’m going to stick to it.”

Will looks her in the eye. A rare voluntary action for him. He can see the shape of her thoughts in the crinkles and laugh lines. She has a core of steel, which he probably could have guessed of Jack’s mate.

“You’re going to beat it.” Will says quietly.

She gives him a startled look. “I’m going to try.”

“No.” He stares into her intently, speaking directly to her soul, behind the fear and doubts. “You will beat this.” There isn’t a doubt in his mind.

Her eyes widen and she loses her breath for a moment. Will looks away, out the window, giving her a moment to compose herself.

“Jack speaks often about you.” She says. There is a hint of curiosity and, wonderment maybe, in her voice, but she hides it well.

“I’m not sure how to feel about that.”

“Oh, it’s nothing bad. Some frustration occasionally. I think he is rather in awe of you, to be honest.”

Will remembers Hannibal’s words about Jack seeing him as a fragile teacup and frowns. Bella smiles sadly.

“He’s not perfect, I know. Believe me, I know better than anyone how he can be. If he thinks it serves the greater good, he will bend rules and manipulate and push people until they break. But he pushes himself just as hard and holds himself to impossible standards.”

“We all have our limits.” Will says quietly.

“I know.” And now her face reflects her regretful tone. “But he can’t see that until after they’ve been reached. And the consequences weigh heavy on him.”

There is something in that statement. She’s not just talking about Will. There had been someone else, maybe more than one person, who Jack had pushed too far. He would have to analyze that later.

“I did try to tell him.” Will tells her now. “I didn’t know I had a brain infection, but I told him from the beginning that *looking* is bad for me.”

“Which is why he owes you a big, damn apology.” Will laughs at that, the tension breaking. “Which you *will* get. Eventually.”

“Something to look forward to, I guess.” Will leans back in the tilted bed, his IV line tugging at him uncomfortably.

Bella stays for a little while after that. He finds her easy enough to talk to and he thinks a little better of Jack for managing to find and hang onto such a person. Will has never spent much time around other omegas. It is a sad fact that law enforcement still tends to be dominated by alphas and beta men. Being around Bella is comforting in a way he has not felt before.

In historic times, omegas and beta women would gather together in groups for support, children watched over by the community. That type of socialization morphed over the centuries, named different things and holding different roles, but the comfort that child bearers draw from the presence of other bearers is a real phenomenon.

She squeezes his hand before she goes, looking more tired and frail than when she arrived. “Can I visit you again?”

“Please do.”

Getting Better

Chapter Summary

Will continues his stay in the hospital.

Chapter Notes

Alright you crazy kids, Hanni's back. I know that's what you've been waiting for.

Will's most prevalent visitor barely even deserves the title, as he practically moves into the room with Will, leaving only to go to work, cook food, and change his clothes. Hannibal stays vigilant by his bedside at all other times. He politely grills the nurses and doctors about every step of Will's treatment.

Will is unsure how to take Hannibal's dedication. Such behavior is typical from an alpha who's omega is ill, but they don't exactly have a typical bond. But he finds that he enjoys having Hannibal there. He is handy for explaining the medical terminology to him, and he certainly serves better food than the hospital's meager fare.

Usually Will would find such persistent company grating after not too long, but he does not truly mind Hannibal being there. Even the silences between them are comfortable, Will reading a book while Hannibal goes over paperwork. The conversations, though, are the real enlightenment. They talked some, of course, during their visits together. Even during heat, you can't spend three entire days doing nothing but have sex, but intellectual faculties are somewhat hindered during that time so whatever they said wasn't exactly profound.

Turns out that Hannibal has a previously unknown penchant for the profound and (it must be said) the dramatic. They transverse a wide array of subjects from art to human nature to gardening. Will doesn't, as a rule, spend a lot of time talking with people for fun. Having Hannibal around is exercising some underused mental muscles, and some of the topics posed were making Will consider things he always believed to be true about himself. He wonders if this is an effect of Hannibal being a psychiatrist or something about the man himself and his odd relationship to Will.

"May I ask you a question?" Hannibal asks one day toward the end of Will's first week in the hospital. They have done the biopsy of his overy and scheduled him for surgery the next day to remove the tumor. Will is trying hard not to think about everything that could go wrong, so he is glad for the distraction.

“Shoot.”

“Why do you keep doing it? Going to crime scenes, I mean. I know Jack can lay on the pressure, but-” he waves a hand to indicate the room. “If it is detrimental to your health to start with, then doing it with an infected brain must have been truly hellish. No one would have blamed you for saying enough.”

“Well…”

“Jack may be stubborn, but even he would have to concede defeat at some point. And you have friends who would defend you.”

“I’m helping save lives.” That phrase is starting to sound tired and Hannibal can hear it.

“There are other ways to help save lives that don’t include putting your own at risk.” It is close to what his father had told him a few weeks ago.

Will picks at the scratchy hospital blanket. He doesn’t have an answer. If Hannibal sounded disapproving, he could go on the defensive, but there is just concerned curiosity in his accented voice.

“I’m sorry. It’s none of my business. You are capable of making your own decisions.” He apologizes.

“It’s fine.”

“I should not have said anything.”

“No, it’s really fine. I’ve asked myself the same question. It’s just-” His voice grows smaller than he would like, “Working in law enforcement is all I wanted to do growing up. But I couldn’t cut it as a cop, I never even made it to being a real agent. So you know the saying, ‘those that can’t do, teach’? Even though I knew it was bad for me and even though my brain was on fire, I did it because for the first time in a long time I was *doing* and that felt good.”

Hannibal is quiet as he digests Will’s words. “That is understandable. But, Will,” the alpha looks into his eyes, and Will can see a hint of something he doesn’t want to put a name to shining in their dark depths. “Perhaps it is time to find something different to *do* .”

Will considers this, and nods mutely, run out of words. Hannibal seems to sense this and lets the topic go.

It is two full weeks before he is given the ok to go back home, providing he take it easy for another week. The surgery had gone well and he was scheduled for some follow up examinations at his local hospital in the coming weeks.

Will is more than ready to see his dogs and sleep in his own bed. His dislike of hospitals had not been assuaged even a little over the last few weeks. Hannibal drops him off, wanting to stay but having to meet with a patient. He presses a covered dish on Will with a mock stern admonition to eat. Will laughs.

“I don’t need supervision, you know. Despite recent events, I am capable of taking care of myself.”

Hannibal smiles back at him. “I am aware, but perhaps I enjoy taking care of you.”

Will feels himself flush. He admonishes himself for feeling like a teenager. He opens the door to the Bentley and starts to get out.

“Oh, Will?” Hannibal stops him.

“Yes?” Will turns back.

Warm lips press firmly against his own in a quick kiss. Before he could process what is happening, they are gone.

“Have a good day.” Hannibal says smoothly. Will stares at him wide eyed for a moment then scurries into the house, telling himself that he was most definitely not running away.

Alana promised to bring the dogs back later that afternoon, so the house seems far too quiet. The emptiness puts Will on edge. He goes to take hot shower, washing away the feel of the hospital. The adrenaline from Hannibal’s sneak attack fades. He feels tired and wrung out, exhaustion from his still recovering body draining him. He finds himself crawling into bed and falling asleep before noon even arrives.

Cake or Death?

Chapter Summary

Will gets an unwelcome visitor.

He isn't sure what it is that wakes him. The scent, maybe, or some unnamed sense that lets one know that they aren't alone. His body goes from sleep to tense awareness before his brain has caught up. He slowly opens his eyes to gaze into the face of a man scarce inches from his own. Will's perception goes into overdrive. One thing that stands out glaringly obvious from the rest is that this man is severely, dangerously, unbalanced.

"Professor Graham." he drawls. "So nice to finally meet you."

Will takes in the gleaming scalpel in the man's sure grasp, dots connect.

"Abel Gideon."

The former surgeon looks pleased. "My, my, they weren't exaggerating about you. Well done."

Will sits up slowly, telegraphing his movements. Gideon watches, looking vaguely amused.

"What brings you to my house, Doctor?" He glances out the window. The long shadows of the trees let him know that it's late afternoon. Alana will be here soon with the dogs. He is undecided if that will help or hurt the situation. He turns his full attention to the man in front of him.

"So polite," Gideon muses. "You know, of course, I'm no longer a doctor. My license was revoked. The powers that be don't take too kindly to doctors slicing up their mates and children."

"They can't revoke knowledge." Will keeps his eyes glued to the man's face, resolutely not looking at the scalpel.

Gideon chuckles. "Point, Mr. Graham. You are a sharp one. Good to know the rumors are true."

What rumors? Will wonders. *How does Gideon know about me?*

Gideon sits down on the bed beside him, much to his discomfort. He is profoundly grateful he had put on sweatpants after his shower instead of sleeping in his usual underwear.

“The reason I came calling, so to speak, is that I am having a bit of an...identity crisis.” Gideon smiles, this time without humor, really just a curl of the lip. “My mind is a jumble of different people. Stuck in there, rattling around. I wonder if you can relate?”

Will feels the weight of a now motionless pendulum ever present in the back of his mind. “I understand.”

“Good.” Gideon leans forward, further into his space.

Will feels his skin crawl, wanting desperately to get away. He doesn’t move. The threatening alpha’s breath puffs on his face, filling his sinuses with his unpleasant scent.

“I need you to find the Chesapeake Ripper.”

Will blinks at that. Cautiously, he ventures, “If I knew how to find him, I would have already.”

“Ah, but you have been looking for him out there.” Gideon waves his free hand out, indicating the general outside world. The hand with the scalpel doesn’t waver. “I need you to find him in here.” He taps the side of his head.

Empathy, in general, is an involuntary action. A trait developed in humans to allow them to live together more or less peacefully. Will, with his overactive imagination and increased sensitivity, had found ways of managing and harnessing empathy. But it is not something he can just turn off. So, yes, he understands Abel Gideon. He understands him because he can see his point of view. Though understanding the murderer’s reasoning does remarkably little to alter Will’s opinion of him.

Abel Gideon is a remorseless monster who brutalized his family in an impulsive burst of temper. He is a sociopath, but not a psychopath. There is a distinct difference that Will is quite aware of. The Chesapeake Ripper is an intelligent psychopath. Gideon is as far from being the Ripper as Will’s dogs are from being a wolf pack. But someone had put the Ripper into his head, had twisted an already twisted mind into a coiled mess of knots.

“I would think,” Each of Will’s words fell, measured as a scientist working with volatile chemicals. “You wouldn’t want anyone else poking at your mind.”

“Yes, I have felt somewhat like the proverbial pincushion. Don’t you worry about that, though. I’ve...returned the favor, you might say.”

Will didn’t like the feral grin that split Gideon’s face. He sees movement out of the corner of his eye, but doesn’t dare look.

Gideon continues. “And from what I understand, Will, may I call you Will?” The man doesn’t wait for him to answer. “You don’t prod so much as...absorb. Isn’t that so? Maybe you will become the Chesapeake Ripper.”

Will can see out the window behind Gideon now. He will have to make this fast. Without another thought, he dives for the floor. Before Gideon can react, a bullet shatters the window

and hits the murderer in the back. He falls forward onto the bed with an expression of shock, followed quickly by one of pain. He drops the scalpel. Will snatches it up.

His sheets are beginning to stain red. Gideon groans. There is the sound of rapidly approaching footsteps, and then Alana bursts into the room holding a small hand gun.

“Will! Are you alright? I’ve called the police.”

“I’m fine. Though I think he’s a little worse for wear.” He gestures to the bleeding man.

“We should probably put some pressure on that wound.” Alana says.

Neither of them move, watching him twitch in agony.

“I didn’t hear you pull up.” Will says, almost conversationally.

“Prius. Great car for stalking.”

They fall silent again. In the far distance, there is the faintest echo of sirens.

“When did you get a gun?”

“Month or so ago. Beverly suggested it.”

“Ah.” A few drops of red splattered onto the floor.

“Good thing to have, working with the FBI.”

“Yeah.”

The sirens are much closer now. The dogs , still in Alana’s car begin to howl along with them. Then the house is full of motion. The police swarming in followed by paramedics.

Alana and Will both hold up their hands, the gun and scalpel removed from their respective grasps. They are taken outside to give their statements, as Gideon is worked on, surrounded by doctors and officers.

Aftermath

Chapter Summary

The rest of Will's day after Gideon's intrusion.

Around an hour later, Jack shows up, taking charge of the situation. Gideon had been taken in secure restraints to the hospital. As the adrenaline fades, Will begins to feel slightly faint. He hopes he is not about to swoon like some Victorian omega in front of Jack and Alana. He catches Alana looking at him in concern. She whispers something to Jack who looks back over at him, nods, then says something to the head officer.

He comes over to Will as the police seem to start packing up. “They say you can go back in the house now.”

“Can I bring the dogs in?” Will felt bad for the interior of Alana’s car. When the dogs had seen Will, they had gone crazy. He had pet them as best he could through the cracked windows, but he couldn’t risk letting them out until the forensic team was done.

Jack nods. Will opens the door to an avalanche of warm, furry bodies who are ecstatic to be let out and near their person. Will laughs, feeling significantly better as he is nosed over by his pack.

It’s another hour before the police finally disperse, leaving only Alana and Jack, the latter of which looking slightly shamefaced.

“I owe you… well more than just one apology, Will. I should have informed you that Gideon had escaped from custody. I didn’t imagine he would go after you. He was targeting his previous psychiatrists. I didn’t want to disturb your recovery.” He hesitates, seems to come to some inner conclusion, squares his shoulders, and goes on. “I should not have pushed you so hard in the field. In hindsight, I realize I should have seen you were ill. You tried to tell me it was getting to be too much, but I didn’t listen.”

He is quiet a moment, looking down. Then he looks Will in the eye. Will is too startled to look away. “I’m sorry. I hope you are willing to work with the BAU after your back at full strength, but I will understand if you just want to go back to teaching.”

Will blinks, breaking Jack’s laser gaze. Well, Bella was right. He looks at Alana who gives him a wide eyed look back. She is just as flabbergasted as he. Hearing Jack admit he was wrong AND apologizing? This is one for the history books.

Will gathers himself. “Thank you, Jack. I...wasn’t taking very good care of myself. I should have gotten checked out when I first suspected something was wrong. And there was no

reason to think Gideon would come here." Will pauses, that line of thought catching a memory. "Though, I would like to know how Gideon knew where my house is, and he said he had heard of my...ability. Who has been talking to him about me?"

"We are certainly going to find out." Jack says grimly.

"I have my suspicions on that count." Alana says with a hard look that reminds Will that she had just shot a man a few hours ago. He could almost feel sorry for whoever aroused her ire.

Will gets back on track. "As for the rest...I'll think it over. I…" he considers, finishing slowly. "I think it is time to start considering a change."

Alana looks pleased at that, which he tries not to be resentful of. She had never liked him working in the field. Jack merely nods thoughtfully. They both head out shortly after that.

Will's stomach lets him know that it has been a long time since he last ate. The covered dish that Hannibal had given to him beckons from the fridge. It feels like ages since the alpha had dropped him off. He lifts the lid off the dish. It is some sort of stew. He recognizes lentils, carrots, and some type of tender meat. Simple, filling, and easy to reheat. He scoops a portion into an old chili bowl and nukes it. He is just sitting down to eat at the counter, seven pairs of eyes watching him hopefully, when his cellphone rings.

He considers ignoring it, but picks it up. It might be important. He checks the caller id and answers.

"Hannibal."

"Will." The man's rolling baritone is infused with concern. Will's pulse kicks up. "I heard there was an incident at your house."

"How did you-- Alana." He doubted Jack would have called him, and she is so keen to get them together. He can't find it in him to be truly angry at her, though.

"I cannot reveal my sources."

"Of course not. Well, incident is one way to describe it."

"Are you well?"

"I'm…" And abruptly he isn't fine, everything catching up with him all at once. Gideon had come into his house. His home. His secure boat on the sea. Omegas are very protective of their safe spaces, and Gideon's invasion had broken the sanctity of his den.

Hannibal seems to hear all his unsaid words. "May I come to you?" Always so polite, even when his instincts must be screaming at him to rush to his mate's side.

"I can't ask you to…" But it's weak, token protest. He sighs and gives up. "Please?" He is too tired and upset to pretend he doesn't want his alpha's comfort.

"I am leaving now. I will see you soon."

Will eats, feeling famished, finishing two bowls. He is careful not to think too hard as he washes the dishes and feeds the dogs. He idles in the living room. It feels dusty and wrong, not just from the intrusion, but from sitting empty for two weeks. The sheets on the bed are gone, taken for evidence. It is fortunate he utilized a rubber liner for his night sweats, otherwise the mattress would have been ruined. He goes upstairs for new linens, settling on a set of flannel sheets worn soft as butter. He'll need the tactile solace tonight.

The dogs all perk up just before the headlights of the Bentley shine through the windows. Will goes out onto the porch, watching the dark figure get out of the car with a small overnight bag. Without quite meaning to, he leans into Hannibal when he gets to the doorway. They stand like that for several long minutes, not talking, not even embracing, just sharing their weight and breathing each other in.

Will stands back, letting Hannibal pass through the threshold. It occurs to him that he has never had Hannibal in his house before. The alpha looks around with interest. Will is stricken with an attack of self consciousness. Maybe he should have tidied up more. That part of his brain that is run by instinct is telling him that it is vital his mate approves of his den.

The dogs come up and sniff at Hannibal curiously, and Will is proud that they don't jump up on him. They seem to realize they are in the presence of the 'top dog' and keep a respectful distance. Will, to keep himself from hovering, sits on the bed, nervously running his hands over the soft sheets. Hannibal examines his fly-tying table and plays a few notes on the piano.

Will knows that his house probably isn't as luxurious as Hannibal is accustom to, but he has spent years making it comfortable for himself. He spent so much of his life moving around. This house is the first place he ever thought of as permanent. It is his. *But maybe* , a little voice in his mind whispers, *it could be* ***ours*** .

"May I inquire where the bathroom is?" Hannibal asks. Will blinks, startled at the sudden break in the silence. It had been so comfortable he hadn't even noticed neither of them had spoken since the other man arrived. There is a half bath on the ground floor, but he leads the man to the upstairs full bath.

Leaving him to his ablutions, Will wanders back downstairs to sit on the edge of his bed, which know strikes him as rather small for two full grown men. He changes into his night clothes and crawls in, enveloping himself in softness. He rubs his fingertips along the warm fabric nervously. He hears the rattle of the pipes as water drains from upstairs, and a few minutes later Hannibal appears, wearing pajamas that probably cost more than Will's entire wardrobe. Will scoots over, indicating the other man is welcome. Hannibal slides in next to him. It is a tight squeeze, but the warmth and press of the alpha's body seems to press some button in his brain. Feeling protected and cared for, he drifts off while Hannibal gently rubs his back.

Falling For the First Time

Chapter Summary

Will and Hannibal get closer. Will returns to work.

Chapter Notes

Yeah, I'm not good at coming up with chapter titles, so you might see a lot of song names in the future. Just roll with it. Thank you all so much for the kudos and your wonderful comments! Knowing that there are people waiting for updates is what keeps me writing.

Things change after that. Well, things had already been changing since Will had to go to the hospital. Honestly, since Jack asked Hannibal to his office. Against all odds, Will finds himself slowly acquiring a mate. A real one, not just a government approved fuck buddy. They spend their evenings together more days than not. Will leaning against a granite countertop watching Hannibal create culinary masterpieces, or sitting in companionable silence on his porch watching the sun go down. Will wouldn't have expected Hannibal to fit so well into his dog filled little house out in the woods. But it seems Alana had been right, despite their apparent differences, they worked. Their personalities fit well together and both were willing to make compromises to allow the each other into their respective lives.

They don't take their relationship to a more physical level, though. It seems ridiculous considering all they have already done together, but it seems wrong somehow in the wake of the fragile relationship they are building. There is sexual awareness, of course. Tense moments of eye contact or an accidental brush of the arm or hand. It was exciting in some strange way. Will has never felt this sort of building anticipation. There is a warmth in his chest when he is with Hannibal and he finds himself smiling whenever he thinks of him. He wonders if this is what falling in love feels like. Then he wonders if that thought should alarm him. It doesn't. In the deepest part of him, it feels completely right.

It's with mixed feelings that Will goes back to work after his doctors give him the go ahead. He is surprised and touched to find several get well notes in his office from students and other teachers. Falling back into the routine is easy enough, but he often finds himself feeling restless, waiting for the phone to ring and Jack to tell him a body's been found. It's not to be, though. He hears very little from the BAU until the team are all called in to give their depositions for Hobbs' trial.

He sits between Hannibal and Jack in a conference room across from the FBI's prosecuting lawyer who informs them that since Hobbs is pleading guilty, they will not need to testify. Will asks Jack if Abigail and Mrs. Hobbs are being charged with anything. Looking unhappy about it, Jack says so far no hard evidence has turned up to suggest either of them were involved. The two profilers exchange a glance. They both know that Abigail at least almost certainly was helping her father, but there is no real way to prove it short of confession.

He goes home with Hannibal afterward. He is quieter than usual that evening as he analyzes his emotions. He finds that he is not particularly upset that Abigail is going unpunished, and that bothers him. As a law enforcer, even one with only a special investigator badge, he should want to see justice done. *But what is justice?* He asks himself. *A scared girl's future being ruined for trying to save herself? What about the girls who died? Will they be any less dead for her being imprisoned?*

Hannibal's voice breaks into his swirling thoughts. "Our meal is ready."

He follows the alpha into the dining room, and smiles slightly to see candles lit and places set in a perfect romantic picture. He tries to put the darker thoughts out of his head and concentrate on his meal, which certainly deserves full attention.

Hannibal draws him into light conversation, relaying some amusing anecdotes from his residency, and Will is feeling much better by the time they retire to the sitting room for drinks. They sit on the couch, knees pressed together. Hannibal's arm is stretched along the back, opening his body toward Will. Who, feeling warm from the alcohol, is considering leaning into him. Before he can do so, Hannibal speaks.

"There is a performance this weekend at the opera that I have been looking forward to attending."

Will recalls that Hannibal is on some board or other that supports the Baltimore arts. "That's nice."

"Would you go with me?"

Will blinks, letting the innocuous question sink in as his mind begins to spin out all the possible consequences that it could lead to.

"Do you-," he pauses, and reconstructs his question. "In what role?"

Hannibal raises an eyebrow. "Role?"

"I'm guessing there are going to be a lot of acquaintances of yours there." Will leads.

"Yes."

"How are you going to introduce me to them?"

Hannibal smiles, a glint of sharp canines. "As my mate." The words cause Will's pulse to kick up a notch.

“Do any of them know you are mated?”

“Those who are alphas and omegas can certainly smell that I am bonded. I am sure they have informed those who cannot scent it.”

“And they aren’t going to wonder why, after three years, your mate is only showing up now?”

“I’m sure there will be much speculation.” Hannibal sounds unconcerned.

“And that doesn’t bother you?”

“Why should it? I doubt anyone will be rude enough to ask outright. It is no one’s business but our own.”

Will gives him a Look. “When has that ever stopped gossip?”

“Does it bother you?” Hannibal tilts his head inquiringly.

Will sighs. “No, not really. I’ve spent too much time having my mental state whispered about to really care much anymore.”

“Will you come, then?”

“I don’t think I have anything appropriate to wear.” It’s a last ditch excuse and they both know it.

“Easily remedied.”

Will examines his placid expression suspiciously. “You’ve already bought me something, haven’t you?”

“Perhaps.”

“Awful sure of yourself.”

“Not at all. I did not know if you would want to attend this performance, or indeed if you were even free to do so. But a good suit is useful in many circumstances. If nothing else, I planned to give it to you as a gift.”

Will sighs again. “Just don’t ever let me know how much it cost.”

“Perish the thought.”

At the Opera

Chapter Summary

Will and Hannibal attend the opera.

He drives to Hannibal's several hours before the performance is to begin. The alpha is still at his office, so he lets himself in with the key he had been rather ceremoniously presented with. He goes up to the master bedroom to find the suit laid out on the bed. He runs a finger down the sleeve of the coat. It is incredibly soft, and knowing Hannibal would probably fit like a glove. He looks at himself in the full length mirror. His face is covered with scruff, curly hair wild. At least he had been sleeping better so he didn't have such heavy bags under his eyes. Still, he doesn't look like someone who should wear this suit. He looks like someone who should be stockpiling canned goods in bunker.

He looks something up on his phone, leaves, locking the door behind him, and drives into downtown Baltimore. He finds what he is looking for and parks in front of an old fashioned barbershop, complete with red and white pole. An hour later, he emerges looking marginally more respectable, shaved, shorn, and styled. He heads back to Hannibal's and dons the The Suit, as he has started thinking of it.

It is far more comfortable than any suit has buisness being. A navy so dark that the blue only shows up when the light hits it, paired with a crisp white shirt. There is a matching waistcoat and bowtie. The cufflinks are, he is sure, genuine sapphires. He avoids looking in the mirror until he has the shiny shoes tied and sleeves straightened. A stranger looks back at him from his reflection. *Well, at least it's not plaid* .

He senses more than hears Hannibal approach. When had he gotten home? The door to the bedroom opens and he turns. The alpha pauses in the doorway, eyes sweeping him up and down. Will doesn't miss the banked fire in his gaze. He moves into the room.

"I am glad to see the suit fits."

"Yes. I wonder how the tailor got such precise measurements." He feels his lips curl up in an unaccustomed teasing grin.

Hannibal prowls close to him, he rubs a thumb along Will's smooth jaw. "Who can say?" he says, eyes crinkling in a returned smile. He tilts Will's chin up and kisses him softly on the lips. Will opens to him and soon they are kissing deeply. A hand against Will's lower back urges him to press against the alpha and he does, one of his legs slipping between the other man's. They pull away after a few minutes, both flushed and breathing heavy.

“Enough of that for now.” Hannibal says, removing his hands reluctantly off his mate. “We will be late if we don’t stop, and I still need to dress.”

The drive to the opera house is filled with a vibrating tension. They do not touch, but every glance between them feels like a caress. As they leave the car to the valet and enter, Hannibal offers his arm to Will, who, a bit awkwardly, takes it. The moment he touches him, it’s like an electric connection. They both thrum with physical awareness. This is enough to distract Will, for the most part, from all the eyes on them as they take their seats.

Will made no claims to knowing anything about opera, but even he could tell that this was a masterful production, with a minimalistic set, the story and emotion all conveyed through the performers’ powerful voices. Despite the language barrier, he was swept up, and joined in the standing ovation led by his mate after the last aria. He notices the tears drying on Hannibal’s face and without thinking, brushes them away with his thumb. The alpha turns to him. Will pulls back, embarrassed, but Hannibal catches his hand and presses a lingering kiss to his wrist, right above his thundering pulse.

Something draws his eye over his mate’s shoulder, and he catches two men staring at them, one longingly and one...calculating.

“Do not worry about them.” Hannibal whispers in his ear. Will looks at him questioningly. So Hannibal had noticed them too at some point. “I will explain later. Come, it is time for the dreaded mingling.”

“Socializing.” Will mutters. “My worst nightmare.”

“I find that hard to believe, considering your line of work.”

“You don’t have to make small talk with corpses.”

It was just Will’s luck that he managed to say this just as their was a natural drop in the noise around them so his words sounded far too loud. They got some odd stares. Hannibal just smiled that placid smile back at them.

“You have no tolerance for foolish pretense, Will, which is what most ‘socializing’, as you put it, boils down to. I can see why you prefer to avoid it, but perhaps, at least for tonight,you can let me attempt to change your perspective?”

He led Will to the large, richly appointed lobby where Baltimore’s upper crust was gathering. A server approaches them carrying champagne flutes. Hannibal relieves him of two, and hands one to Will before steering him toward a cluster of people. He speaks lowly to him as they walk.

“You see, the opera is merely the first show of the night. This is the second one. Once you know the other performers and their roles it becomes quite easy to insert yourself, and with some practice, perhaps even become a director.”

The group noticed their approach. An older woman at the center came out to meet them.

“Hannibal! It has been too long.” The rest of the group gathered around them in a loose semi circle with scattered sounds of welcome.

“Mrs. Komeda.” Hannibal greets warmly, taking one of her hands and bowing gallantly over it. “I don’t believe I have ever introduced you to my mate, William Graham?”

“Why, no you haven’t, and shame on you for keeping him hidden away.” She extends a hand to Will who returns a firm handshake. “Elanie Komeda. Good to meet you.”

“The writer?” Will asks.

She laughs. “Well supposedly, most of the time I feel like I’m avoiding the actual writing. Don’t even ask me about my current novel, it has quite gotten away from me.”

“I really enjoyed *Midnight Crew* .”

She beams. “Oh, aren’t you a sweetheart. Hannibal, I might have to steal him away.”

“Now Madam, I should hate to have to fight you for his favor.”

She winks at Will, and introduces him to the rest of the crowd. He still had a cop’s memory for names and faces. It is slightly intimidating to realize he is standing in a circle with some of the most powerful people in the state. One older man he recognizes as a former congressman. He soon realizes why Hannibal had chosen Mrs. Komeda as his introductory point. She knows everyone, and apparently everything about everyone.

Standing between his mate and the petite woman, he is treated to what Hannibal referred to as the second performance, though this one was more of a soap opera. They let him in on all the intricacies of the power plays and petty feuds going on around them, often with amusing commentary. He is having more fun than he expected. Hannibal was right when he said no one would come right out and ask about their relationship, though more than a few tried some not so subtle prying. Will doesn’t actually have to say much. Most people are only too happy to fill the air with their own opinions.

Now Mrs. Komeda is asking when Hannibal is going to throw another dinner party. She turns to Will.

“Have you seen him cook? It’s an entire performance. He use to throw such exquisite dinner parties.” She flicks a look back to Hannibal. “You heard me, use to.”

Hannibal drains his glass and hands it off to a passing waiter. “I will again. Once inspiration strikes. You can’t force a feast, a feast must present itself.”

“It’s a dinner party, not a unicorn.”

“Ah, but the feast is life, you put the life in your belly and you live.”

“Perhaps you can persuade him, William.”

“Oh, I know better than to argue with Hannibal about food.” It is secretly a source of great amusement to Will how poetic Hannibal can get about food.

He notices the two men who had been looking at them earlier hovering on the edge of the group. Mrs. Komeda does, too.

“Hannibal, I think this young man is trying to get your attention.”

Hannibal turns, keeping his pleasant demeanor. Will has to fight back a wince at the following exchange. He himself isn’t the best in social situations, but this Franklyn guy is taking awkward to new level. Seeing a psychiatrist is not really something to announce at any time.

“This is my friend Tobias,” Franklyn says.

Hannibal nods politely. “Did you enjoy the performance?” He inquires. Will studies the man’s face. There is something...absent in it.

“I did. Every minute.” Franklyn interjects.

“I’m surprised you saw any of it.” Tobias’ voice is cool. “He could barely take his eyes off of you.” He tells Hannibal. Will raises his eyebrows. The words were almost mocking, but was that an undercurrent of jealousy?

Will glances at Hannibal who is looking carefully blank. He turns back as Franklyn gestures to him. “And who is your...friend?” The man’s displeased tone on the last word is abundantly obvious.

“My mate, Will.” He glances at Hannibal, noting his omission of his last name. He feels Tobias’s intent gaze switch to him. A twitch in his nose tells him the man is an alpha, and a signal in his hindbrain tells him that he is a dangerous one. Hannibal, as if sensing his tension, takes his arm.

“And if you will excuse us, all. We have another appointment awaiting us.” They make their way to collect their coats and have the car brought around.

“Are you hungry?” Hannibal asks.

“I could eat.”

Feels Like the First Time

Chapter Summary

Smut. But tender smut.

They go to an upscale yet intimate restaurant where the owner and head chef comes out and greets Hannibal in person, chattering to him jovially in Italian. They dine on caesar salad, risotto and fresh bread. A fancy wine of some vintage Will has to assume is a good one disappears between them. They talk lightly about the opera, not mentioning their abrupt departure. He is feeling warm and full when they arrive back at Hannibal's house.

He stretches as he stands in the entryway, reaching high. The suit jacket rides up. There is a jingle of keys as Hannibal enters behind him. A hand snakes around his waist and he's pulled against Hannibal's warm body. His huffed breath of laughter catches in his throat as lips find the scar of his mating mark on the back of his neck. Will's knees go weak. He had alway thought that was just an expression, but it happens. He leans back heavily, Hannibal's arms holding him up, head tipped to the side to give access to his throat. There is a low rumble in the alpha's chest and Will purrs in response.

He's turned around and pressed against the door, lips on his. He hitches a leg up around Hannibal's waist and grinds against him. His shirt is pulled from his pants for eager hands to get under it, the expensive fabric bunching up. He moans into his mate's mouth when his nipple is pinched. He bites playfully at the alpha's lips.

They press against each other there in the entranceway, rubbing and touching. Exploring each other as if they have never touched before. Hannibal gets Will's shirt unbuttoned and applied his mouth to his now over sensitive nipples. He arches into it, panting, fingers digging into Hannibal's back. Finally, Hannibal pulls away, looking flushed and rumpled, which Will has to concede looks rather good on him. He presses a kiss to his jaw.

"The bedroom," Hannibal whispers into his skin. Will nods. Holding hands, and stumbling like over eager teenagers, they make it up to the bedroom. Will is tumbled onto the bed, arms and legs opening eagerly to make a space for Hannibal. The bedspread is rich and soft, but Will is focused only on Hannibal. The weight of the alpha on top of him feels right. He runs his hands over the broad shoulders, pushing the tuxedo jacket off. Nimble fingers work on the buttons of the other man's shirt and soon the two of them are bared to each other, formal wear left in a heap on the floor.

They have done this many times before, of course, but it feels different this time. There is some fragile, exciting, breathless *thing* between them now. They are not just thrown together by compatible body chemistry and convenience. They fit together body and mind, moving in tandem. It feels, in some strange intangible way like the first time.

Hannibal runs his hands down Will's naked flanks like a sculptor shaping clay. Will arches into the touch, unable to stay still, pleading silently with his body for more. The hands find the sharp jut of his hipbone, tracing along it and the crease of his thigh. He opens his legs wider, sex straining and curved toward his stomach. He can feel the wetness of slick leaking from him. He implores with every line of his body for more.

Hannibal finally grasps his cock, stroking the slim organ from tip to base. He runs a finger down his perineum. Omega males do not have testicles, instead there is a very sensitive area of skin between cock and anus that, when delivering pups, will open to create the birth canal. Hannibal presses that spot, causing Will to bow and a keening noise to escape him. Then, oh then, Hannibal slides down and takes his cock into his mouth.

They never did this during the haze of heat sex, their biology driving them to more (theoretically) reproductive acts.The small part of Will not focused on the pleasure laments that they have not tried it sooner. The hot tightness of Hannibal's mouth, the insistent suction. He can feel his orgasm building, he just needs...something…

Yes! There! Hannibal pushes two fingers into Will's hole. The omega gives a cry of pure release, his sterile spend filling Hannibal's throat, who swallows deliberately. Will goes boneless, weak from his orgasm. Hannibal moves back up his body, hitching his legs over his shoulders. Will's probably going to feel that in his hips and back tomorrow, but right now he is too high from endorphins to care.

Hannibal's big, alpha cock slides into him easily. Will lets out a purring moan at feeling it for the first time in nearly eight months. God, that stretch. He is filled, stuffed full, and loves it. The rhythm is easy and rocking, not at all like the rough coupling of heat sex. The second orgasm builds even more slowly, a gradual build like ascending the hill of a rollercoaster. When Hannibal finally tips over the edge, knot locking inside of him, streams of seed filling him, Will follows in a rush. It seems to last a long time, waves of pleasure rushing over him as his body tenses and releases until he is completely wrung out.

He lies in the haze of afterglow still beneath Hannibal, body giving the occasional twitch. The knot goes down and the alpha pulls carefully out of him, and rises off the bed, padding to the ensuite bathroom. Will gives a noise of protest, but Hannibal is soon back with a damp washcloth, which he uses to clean Will. Then he urges him off the (now soiled) duvet and under the blankets. Will moves himself somewhat reluctantly, burrowing down into the soft mattress and high thread count sheets. It's not *his* nest, but it isn't bad and it smells of them. Hannibal finds him on the big bed and cradles him protectively against his body. Will smiles contentedly into his chest.

Let the Bodies Hit the Floor

Chapter Summary

It's the organ harvester episode, essentially.

Chapter Notes

It has occurred to me that I end way too many chapters with Will falling asleep and then waking up the next chapter. Thank you all for your comments and kudos!

The pleasant sensation of a deep dreamless sleep is broken abruptly way too early the next morning when Will's phone rings loudly. Will sits bolt up, head spinning from going from sleep to consciousness so fast. Hannibal raises his head off the pillow, watching him as he blearily slides off the bed and digs through his rumpled clothes on the floor. God his mouth tastes like shit.

"Lo?" He finally answers.

"Will, we got a body. Looks like it might be the Ripper." Jack's voice is no nonsense, but Will can detect the edge of eagerness. Jack's sighted his white whale.

"Text me the location, I'll be there as soon as I can."

Will's brain is kicking into gear now. If this really is the Ripper… Well, bad for him or not, he'll help Jack catch that son of a bitch.

"Duty calls?" Hannibal inquires. He is sitting up now.

"Jack thinks it might be a Ripper kill."

Hannibal's eyebrows rise. "Interesting."

Will scrubs his face. "I wonder if I have time for a shower. Though I'll probably want to take one after anyway." Hannibal stands and kisses the top of Will's head.

"Go ahead. I will make you coffee while you get ready."

He in fact gets a warm croissant as well as a travel mug of insanely good coffee. He hustles to the crime scene in a higher end hotel wearing the clothes he had worn yesterday morning.

The forensic team stare at him when he comes in. He stares back for a second nonplussed, then he remembers the shave and haircut. He shakes his head.

“Where’s the body?”

“In here.” Jack calls from the bathroom. He heads that way, trying to clear his thoughts and get in the right headspace.

It’s not the Ripper. It’s obvious. Zeller tentatively tries to argue, clearly remembering their talk in the hospital. Will doesn’t begrudge him his opinion. He doesn’t back it up either.

“You’ll get him, Jack. This just isn’t him.”

Jack sighs heavily and nods. “Well, we’re still going to nail this sucker, Ripper or not.”

It’s late morning by the time he can get back to Wolf Trap to feed his dog and change his clothes. Luckily it’s Saturday, so he doesn’t have anything else to do the rest of the day. He catches up on his grading, takes a long walk through the woods, finishes up a fly he had been neglecting.

Despite the grim morning, he feels good. There is a lightness to his heart that he can’t remember ever being there before, and he is fairly certain he knows the cause. He broils one of the fish in his deep freeze for dinner. He seasons it simply with salt, butter, and lemon juice. He can’t help but wonder what Hannibal could do with a brace of fresh fish. Maybe he would ask if he could bring some.

His Sunday passes in much the same quiet manner. He finds himself glancing at his phone, wondering if he should call Hannibal. He didn’t have a real reason to. He just sort of wants to hear the alpha’s voice. Then he wants to smack himself for acting like a stupid romcom character. He sets his phone away and busies himself with cleaning instead. The physical labor helps keep him from having to think too hard.

It strikes him as he is mopping the kitchen floor that he is exhibiting classic signs of an omega preparing his nest for a mate. But he’s not doing this for Hannibal. He’s doing it for himself. Because the house was getting too messy. Sure. He leans back against the kitchen counter. Fuck he’s got it bad.

He doesn’t have time to dwell on his new found feelings, because bodies are dropping like flies the next few weeks. He stands with the forensics team in front of a line of mutilated bodies, all with organs removed. Price lists off what’s missing.

“This guy’s missing a spleen! Who the hell gets a spleen transplant?”

“And the intestines are the only organ missing from this body?”

“Yeah, so we are either looking for someone with short bowels or the Ripper’s making sausage.” Zeller chips in.

“Selling these organs to someone.” Jack says grimly, shifting from foot to foot. He reminds Will of one of his dogs on point.

That sets off Zeller and Price into a round of bickering. Even when they were agreeing they were sniping.

“All right.” Jack shuts them up. He looks at Will. “How many killers?”

“Two.” He is certain.

“You confident one of them is the Chesapeake Ripper?”

“At least one of them.” And isn’t that just a joy. Two organ thieves for the price of one.

He goes and gives a half hearted lecture, turning the students out early so he can go back over the crime scene photos, trying to soak up any amount of information he can about the killers. Eventually his eyes start to cross, pictures turning into irregular shapes from staring at them. He sighs sitting back and rubbing his eyes. He checks his watch, shocked to see it is almost nine. He’s been here for hours.

“Will.” An unexpected but welcome voice speaks from the door.

“Hannibal. What are you doing here?” He can feel a smile forming on his face at the sight of the man.

“Alana said she had looked in on you at seven and you were still working and that I should check on you later to see that you take a break.”

“Ganging up on me now?”

“How terrible for you to have friends who care about your welfare.”

Will sighs, looking over the macabre scrapbook. Hannibal follows his gaze. Well, since he is here…

“What do you see, Dr?” Hannibal looks surprised, but gamely approaches.

“Sum up the Ripper in so many words?”

“Choose them wisely.”

“You know I always do. Words are living things they have personality, point of view, agenda.”

“They’re pack hunters.” It is probably wrong to flirt over pictures of dead bodies.

He grows solemn at Hannibal’s analysis. The man pauses over the picture of Miriam Lass’s arm. Will had only heard about that fiasco after the fact. It had happened while he was in the hospital. He could only shake his head at Jack’s foolishness in trying to goad the Ripper.

Speaking of, Jack walks in followed closely by Beverly.

“Will. and Dr. Lecter, too, what a surprise. We’ve got a lead. Would you care to help us catch the Ripper?”

Hannibal looks rather delighted at the prospect. “How could I refuse?”

Repo Man

Chapter Summary

Case continued.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

They hang back at the ambulance garage. Will watches Hannibal looking around out of the corner of his eye. The man seems fascinated by the whole procedure.

“This is very educational.” He says to Will as Beverly goes to perform her tech wizardry.

“Well, I’m glad you’re having fun.”

It doesn’t take long to pick up the signal on the rouge ambulance and they head out. The SWAT team moving in first, Jack following with his shotgun. Hannibal and Will watch from a distance.

“Dr. Lecter!” Jack shouts. They exchange a glance and hurry over.

“I need you to asses the situation here, Doctor.”

Hannibal looks, taking in everything with a calm that must have served him well in the operating room. “He was removing his kidney. Poorly.”

Trust him to criticise the illegal organ harvester’s technique . Will thinks.

“I can stop the bleeding.” He says, already starting to remove his coat.

“Do it.”

Will watches Hannibal easily slide a gloved hand next to the medical student’s. With ingrained competence, he manipulates the victim’s open incision.

“I’ve got it.”

Will doesn’t pay attention to the arrest of Sylvester. He only has eyes for Hannibal, saving the life of the man on the gurney. The doctor looks up briefly, their gazes meeting for a split second, before he returns to his work with a laser focus.

There is a sensation filling Will that he cannot put a name to. It swells within him. There is awe and pride mixed in it, but the only thing he can think as he watches the hunched over figure is *Mine. My Mate. My Alpha.*

He stays until the real paramedics come and take over. Hannibal strip the bloody gloves off and puts his coat back on. Will has to smile at the way he fusses with straightening it. The man's just had his hand in someone else's body and he's worried about the line of his suit.

He approaches him. "Well, that was exciting."

"I promise most arrests aren't as eventful as the two you've witnesses."

"I shall have to take your word for it." He looks around at the flurry of agents . "What happens now?"

"Paperwork. The answer to that is always paperwork."

"Ah. One wonders how the world managed to turn before it was invented."

Luckily they managed to hitch a ride back to Quantico with Beverly since Jack was overseeing the detainment of Sylvester.

"It's late." Will says to Hannibal as they walk to his car in the dark. He hesitates, the soldiers on and asks. "Would you like to come to my house? It's less of a drive than heading all the way back to Baltimore."

Hannibal smiles at him. "I would like that. Though you may have to lend me a pair of pajamas."

"That'll be something to see."

Hannibal in flannel pajama bottoms and a white t-shirt is certainly something to behold, though of course the first time they met he wasn't wearing anything but a bathrobe. Still, Will debates on whether he should take a few surreptitious pictures just to prove it happened. He decides against it. It does something to a deep primitive part of his psyche to see his alpa dressed in his clothes and relaxing in his den. He is grateful now for all that cleaning he did.

They climb under the covers together, the dogs making themselves comfortable in their pile of pillows. He wonders if the dogs bother Hannibal. He has never made any suggestion that they do, but he did mention he had a very sensitive nose. Will gives them regular baths, but it's pretty hard to cover up the smell of seven canines. Well, if the man wasn't able to tolerate his dogs, then Will wouldn't be able to tolerate him. So far the pack and Hannibal have gotten along fine. Will suspects that some handmade sausage may have smoothed things over a bit.

Once they are settled and the lights turned out, Hannibal puts his arm around Will's shoulders. He rests his head on the alpha's chest. His mind is filled with the events of the night. Hannibal is also in a reflective mood.

"It has been a long while since I used a scalpel on anything but a pencil."

Will turns his head so he can look at the other man's profile. "Why'd you stop being a surgeon?"

“I killed someone. Or, more accurately, I couldn’t save someone. But it felt like killing them.” It is a quiet confession in the dark.

“You were an emergency room surgeon, it had to happen from time to time.” Well, no one ever accused Will of tact. You had to have a thick skin about death in professions such as his. Hannibal doesn’t seem to mind at least.

“It happened one time too many. I transferred my passion for anatomy into the culinary arts. I fix minds instead of bodies, and no one has died as a result of my therapy.”

Will huffs out a laugh against the body warmed cotton covering Hannibal’s chest. Then sighs heavily.

“The Ripper is still out there. There is no connection between him and Sylvester.”

“Jack must be devastated.”

“I’m sure he is. He is too close to the case.”

“He has made it his mission to catch him.”

“And it’s costing him his objectivity.”

“What about you, Will? Do you want to catch the Ripper?”

Will hears the real question. “It doesn’t matter to me if I’m the one to catch him as long as he’s caught.”

“The Ripper is not as personal to you as he is to Jack.”

“No more so than any other killer whose head I have to get into. Which I suppose is pretty damn personal in its own way.” He yawns. “It’s why I shouldn’t do it.” He mumbles into Hannibal’s shoulder. His eyelids are starting to droop.

“Well, the Ripper is not our concern tonight. We have already helped catch one killer today. That is a cause for celebration.”

“Oh?”

“I believe I am going to have a dinner party.”

“The feast is life.” Will remembers. “Mrs. Komeda will be pleased.”

“Will you come?”

Will is just about asleep. “If it’d make you happy.”

Hannibal presses a kiss to his curls. “Nothing would make me happier.” It’s the last thing Will hears before sleep claims him.

Chapter End Notes

Another chapter that ends with Will falling asleep.

All in the Suit that you Wear

Chapter Summary

Will goes to a Fancy Dinner Party

Will finds out that what Hannibal meant by ‘I believe I am going to have a dinner party’ was ‘I am having a dinner party and I just didn’t tell you until two days before it is scheduled so you wouldn’t have time to back out of it.’

Cause for celebration his ass.

He shows up early, awkwardly carrying a bottle of wine the lady at the wine store assured him is a good year. He isn’t entirely aware of proper protocol for fancy dinner parties, but he figures he can’t go wrong with a present to the host.

Hannibal is busy in the kitchen when he arrives, surrounded by a flock of caterers he hired for the event. Will had walked past several in the dining room, setting up an extended table and arranging the place settings. Hannibal pauses in the act of pouring some red liquid into a mysterious machine to give him a kiss on the cheek and accept the bottle. He nods in approval.

“I shall save this for a dinner with just the two of us. I have a recipe for beef liver I have been wanting to try that this will go nicely with.”

“Glad it’s acceptable. I don’t want to distract you too long. It looks like you have a lot to do.”

“You are a welcome distraction.”

“I need to change. Is The Suit still in your closet?”

“Ah. About that…” Will narrows his eyes at him.

“What did you do?”

“I have taken the liberty of purchasing another outfit for you. It is hanging on the back of the bedroom door.”

“Hannibal, you-” Will stops and looks around at the staff. They seem engrossed in their work, but Will knew that didn’t mean they weren’t listening. “We’ll talk about this later.” Hannibal nods, not looking the least bit repentant, which annoys Will. He heads upstairs.

The suit is far too loud for his taste, but with a lack of anything else to wear, he puts it on. He waits in the drawing room as other guests filter in. Alana shows up, looking stunning in a red

dress. Her lips compress in held in laughter as she approaches him.

“Don’t say anything.” He warns.

“I have no idea what you mean.” Her lips twitch.

“I think it’s punishment for making him wear flannel a few nights ago.” Will sulks.

“Now that sounds worth seeing.” She smiles at him. “You look very nice.”

He sighs, put upon. “It would have been nice to be asked my opinion. I’m not crazy about him spending money on me, but if he insists, I’d rather it be on something more, well, me.”

“That sounds like something you two need to discuss. Hannibal can be a bit high handed.”

“I’m learning.”

The man in question appears in the doorway. Will scowls to see that he is dressed in a sleek black suit with only a paisley tie to denote his usual peacocking.

“Thank you all for coming. If you would move to the dining room, dinner is served.” He finds Will in the room and comes over while everyone else files out.

“Two of my favorite people in the same place.” He kisses Alana’s hand, making her laugh. “May I escort you to your seats?” He offers them each an elbow.

Alana winks at Will. “And they say chivalry is dead.” Will rolls his eyes back, but takes the arm anyway.

They are seated on either side of Hannibal at the head of the table. Mrs. Komeda is on Will’s other side and gives him a wide smile.

“Looks like he found a unicorn.” He whispers to her.

“I suspect he had plenty of inspiration.” She nudges him in the ribs in a meaningful way, making him blush.

The dishes are brought out, and everyone applauds. Will has to admit, Hannibal has certainly outdone himself. Hannibal takes it all with polite grace. He waits for the noise to fade away.

“Before we begin, you must all be warned.” He pauses for dramatic effect. “Nothing here is vegetarian.” He smiles at the laughter this elicits. “ *Bon appetit* .”

Will doesn’t recognize most of what is put on his plate, but it all tastes amazing so he can’t complain. The wine served with each course enhances the flavors of the food. He takes small sips, not wanting to overdo it this early.

He catches Hannibal watching his mouth as he licks a stray drop off his lips. He suddenly feels too warm.

“Everything is amazing,” he says to him quietly.

“I’m glad you could share it with me.”

Their eyes linger on each other a little too long, before he is drawn away by a question from Mrs. Komeda. He notices Alana across the table grinning smugly into her glass. He resists the urge to make a face at her.

He stays until after all the other guest have left. The staff took care of most of the clean up, packing away the leftovers and washing up the dishes. Will moves into the library, sipping his after dinner coffee, having forgone a stronger libation. He strips off the jacket of the suit, draping it over a wingback chair. He is examining a copy of *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer* by Patrick Suskind when Hannibal comes in, carrying a snifter.

He settles down in the other chair, crossing one leg over the other. To Will he looks like some sort of predator relaxing after a particularly successful hunt. That little omega in the back of his head pipes that he should invite him back to his nest. He shoves it back down where it belongs.

“An interesting book.” Hannibal idly turns the crystal glass in his hand.

“Odors have a power of persuasion stronger than that of words, appearances, emotions, or will.” Will reads off the page. “The persuasive power of an odor cannot be fended off, it enters into us like breath into our lungs, it fills us up, imbues us totally. There is no remedy for it.” He closes the book and sets it aside. “It certainly took us by storm.”

Hannibal nods thoughtfully. “I have never felt so completely lost in sensation as when I first met you. It was terrible and exhilarating to be reduced to our animal state in such a manner.”

Will reaches up and touches the scar at the back of his neck. A small shudder runs down his spine. He sits down on the edge of the wingback chair.

“I take it your party was a success?”

“I am pleased with the result. I do think the braised heart had a bit too much saffron, but they say the artist is his own worst critic.”

Will leans back, wrinkling the jacket draped on the back. “Why’d you buy me another suit? The other one would have been fine.”

“Do you not like it?”

“I think you know what my opinion on it is, and that didn’t answer the question.”

Hannibal doesn’t look at him, examining the light play off the cut glass of his snifter instead. “Is this the beginning of a lover’s spat?”

Will doesn’t let himself get tripped up by the term lover. “I would rather it be what you psychiatrists call ‘open communication’.” That got a small smile.

“I enjoy buying things for you.”

“I am not comfortable with the amount you are spending on me.”

“I can afford it.” Is the mild reply.

“That’s not the point.” Will feels agitated, he gets to his feet, pacing back toward the shelves.

“Would you have felt better about the suit if I had asked you before I bought it?”

“Yes.”

“Would you have accepted it?”

Will hesitates. “Probably not.”

“You see my dilemma.”

Will glares, trying to hold onto his temper. Sometimes he wishes Hannibal wasn’t always so calm about everything. It could be infuriating. “I may have been willing to accept a suit, but not necessarily this one.”

“What is wrong with the suit?”

“There is nothing wrong with the suit. It is just not a suit that I would wear.”

“You did wear it.”

“Because my other option were my work clothes, which you know wouldn’t be appropriate.”

“I fail to see the problem.”

Will closes his eyes and counts to ten. It doesn’t work. He always thought that was a stupid trick anyway. “The problem, Hannibal, is that it is a suit you would wear.”

Hannibal falls silent at that.

The words come rushing from Will, realizations forming as he says them. “Dressing me up like that, it comes across as, as *possessive* . Like you hung a big neon sign on me saying ‘this is mine’. And that’s not okay. I’m not an extension of you. I have my own tastes and style, and maybe it doesn’t mesh perfectly with yours. But you will just have to learn to deal with that. I’m not an *accessory* .”

Will cuts himself off there. His breath is coming hard as if he has just been running. Hannibal blinks slowly.

“I apologize for offending you.”

Will sighs, the wind taken out of his sails. “I’m not offended. Not really. Just ask me before you want to spend a lot of money on something for me. And I’ll,” he grudgingly adds, “will try to be more accepting of your generosity.”

Hannibal nods. “An acceptable compromise.” He pauses. “Now when you say a lot of money-”

Will does some quick calculations. “Over two hundred dollars.”

Hannibal frowns. “That does not leave much room for surprise gifts. How about a thousand?”

“Five hundred, final offer.”

“Very well.”

“Thank you.”

“Would you like to stay the night?

“No. I should be getting back.” He catches the tightening around Hannibal’s mouth. “It’s not a, a punishment or anything. I’m not still angry. I just, well, feel more comfortable in my own home.” He bites his lip. “Sorry.” He adds though he isn’t sure why.

“Omegas often feel most at ease in their own dens.” Hannibal says.

Will shifts uncomfortably. “I don’t know if it’s a gender thing. I’d say most people regardless are more relaxed at home.”

Hannibal looks at him. “I like the home you have built, Will.”

That warmth blooms in Will’s chest again. “You do?”

“Very much.”

“I thought it might seem kind of messy and, well, low class compared to what you are use to.”

“The house feels loved. You have filled it with things, and animals,” he smiles, “that are important to you. It is a reflection of your caring and considerate nature. I have lived in far humbler circumstances, I promise you. This,” he gestures around him at the house. “is just trappings. I enjoy them, just as I enjoy all my hedonistic pleasures, but I do not need them. Your home is, if you will forgive the triteness, where the heart is. And that is something I have not experienced in a long time.”

Will swallows, unsure what to say in the face of Hannibal’s praising assessment.

“Do you want to come home with me?”

“I should like that very much.”

*Will's suit. Picture from the premier of *King Arthur*

I Don't Wanna Die (So You're Gonna Have To)

Chapter Summary

Hannibal move in. A man gets turned into a cello.

Hannibal does not exactly move in after that, but he certainly seems to spend more time at Will's house in Wolf Trap than he does in Baltimore. Will asks him about the commute to his office, but he just waves him off stating that an hour is not a terribly long drive. Without him quite realizing what is happening, his home starts shifting a little bit at a time into their home.

They move upstairs to the actual bedroom, airing it out. Hannibal asks, quite politely if he could purchase a larger mattress and bed frame. Will agrees, but goes with him to the store. After all, he has to sleep on it, too. They move the bed in the main room to the smaller upstairs bedroom to make it a guest room. In the place where it was, Hannibal puts in a desk and comfortable office chair.

Odd instruments keep showing up in the kitchen. Hannibal does confess that the one area of Will's house that he feels could do with some improvement is the kitchen. Will does not take offense, knowing how much stock Hannibal puts in the culinary arts and tells him he can renovate within reason.

He feels that they might have to have a talk about what 'within reason' means. He's ok with the extra storage space, the extended countertop, and even the confection oven, but he draws the line at replacing the fridge and stove completely. They work fine, and he doesn't see what's so wrong with a spiral range anyway.

Hannibal has left for his office, and Will is planning on spending the day fishing before the weather turns too cold when he gets a call that a body has been found in a concert hall. Reluctantly, he puts away his gear. He is getting weary of responding to these calls. He thinks about the conversation he had with Hannibal while he was in the hospital. It might be time to consider what else there was out there for him.

But in the meantime he has to find out who turned a trombone player into a cello.

He goes to Hannibal's office that afternoon. He had told Will that all his appointments were in the morning that day. Perhaps they could get an early dinner. Hannibal opens his office at his knock, smiling to see him.

"Will, this is a pleasant surprise. Please, come in." He steps back allowing Will through the door.

Will has not actually been in the office before, and looks around with interest. It is very...Hannibal. Grand yet understated, rich and tasteful, filled with sleek lines that convey power and control. He wonders what Hannibal's mind must be like. Does he keep it compartmentalized and labeled? He once mentioned that he employed the method of loci for remembering. Will never saw the need for something like that. He has the pendulum, but his mind tends to work more... organically.

"I take it you are not here for a psychoanalysis?" Hannibal asks, breaking into his thoughts.

"Oh, you wouldn't like me when I'm psychoanalyzed. No. There was a rather creative murder of a member of the Baltimore Symphony. Since I was out, I thought I'd come see you."

"Ah." Hannibal looks pensive for a moment. "Will, what I'm about to tell you borders on doctor/patient confidentiality…"

Tobias Budge's was already on the list to be questioned by the police the next day. With Hannibal's lead, Jack sends Will with the two officers to see what he can intuit from the suspect.

And everything goes to hell.

Will enters behind the officers. As soon as Budge sees them, he is moving. The first officer is stabbed through the eye with a long piece of metal with a wooden handle. The second has a garrote around his neck before Will can pull his gun. There is a slide of the murderer's hand on the weapon and the policeman's neck is opened. Will's bullet clips Budge's ear, and the man is running through the back of the shop. Will follows, but he is gone though a rear door.

Swearing, he calls 911, the clipped recitation of police codes issuing from his mouth easily. Then he calls Jack.

The head of the BAU shows up with a mobile siren clipped to his car. The Baltimore police have already showed up and secured the scene and put out a call to all officers for the manhunt. They are fairly chomping at the bit. It's a phenomenon Will is unfortunately very familiar with. No one in law enforcement likes cop killers.

"Will," He says gravely when he pulls up. "I just got a call. They found him."

"That's good." Will says, brow furrowing at his tone. "What happened? Did he kill anyone else?"

"Yes, get in. We're going to Dr. Lecter's office."

With the siren on the trip from the string shop to Hannibal's office must have not taken more than fifteen minutes, but the seconds stretch into an agonizing lifetime to Will. He is out the car door almost before they have stopped moving, and runs past the officers at the door. He hears Jack behind him smoothing things over, but he doesn't pay him any mind because all his attention is focused on Hannibal.

The alpha looks up from his desk chair when Will enters and the desolate expression on his face is transformed into one of awe. He tries to stand, but his left leg almost goes out beneath him. Will hurries over to him, urging him to sit back down, while his eyes rove cataloging his injuries.

Hannibal cups the back of his head, pressing his nose to the hollow between Will's neck and shoulder. "I was worried you were dead." He whispers.

Will pulls his face back, he wipes the smear of blood off off Hannibal's mouth with his thumb. "I'm fine. He killed the two police officers with me then ran when I shot at him."

"Why did he come here?" Jack asks from beside the desk. The two look at him, their private world shattered for the moment.

"He came to kill my patient." They all look to the sprawled body of what had been Franklyn Froideveaux.

"He was with him at the opera. Is he who he was serenading?"

"I don't know." Hannibal looks at a loss. His hand reaches for Will's and grasps it tightly. "Franklyn knew more than he was telling me. Told Mr. Budge that he didn't have to kill anymore." He takes a deep breath. "Then he broke Franklyn's neck. Then he attacked me."

Will's knuckles go white where he is holding Hannibal's hand.

"You killed him." Jack says, unnecessarily considering the second body in the room. Hannibal nods, eyes staring past him.

He doesn't want to ask with Hannibal hurt and traumatized, but he is still an agent. "Had Franklyn been involved in whatever Budge was doing?"

The psychiatrist sighs. "I thought this was a simple matter of poor choice in friends."

"This doesn't feel simple to me." Jack says, giving them their space.

Will sits down on the desk edge, hand on Hannibal's face, tracing the curve of his sharp cheekbone. "I feel like I dragged you into my world," he says softly.

Hannibal reaches up and clasps the hand, bringing it to his mouth and pressing a kiss to it. "I got here on my own." He says. "But I appreciate the company." Will smiles, despite the circumstances.

"Let me take you home." There is no question he means anywhere other than Wolf Trap.

Whistle

Chapter Summary

Downright loving smut.

Will helps Hannibal up the stairs to their bedroom. He sits him down on the bed and fetches the first aid kit. Hannibal strips down to his boxer briefs. Will's brow furrows in concern. The cuts circling his forearm are mostly superficial. His shirt had protected him from the worst of the weapon. The stab wound on his leg, however, looks like it may need more medical attendance than he is capable of performing.

"Could you fetch the black bag in the top of the closet on the lefts side?" Hannibal asks.

Will does. It turns out to be the doctor's medical bag. He pulls a disposable syringe out of its plastic wrapping and fills it from a glass bottle that Will cannot read the label on. Hannibal injects himself in the calf, just above the wound. He closes his eyes, breathing in deeply for a moment, then takes out several other plastic wrapped items. He goes about cleaning and stitching the stab wound. There is not even a glimmer of pain in his stoically set face. Though, Will suspects the shot helped with that.

Once sewn up, Hannibal sits back with a sigh. "If you could wrap the injuries?"

Will fishes out a roll of gauze and some medical tape. Gently, he bandages his arm, then kneels to cover the careful line of white stitches. Despite everything, Will has a contented, almost prideful feeling in his chest. His alpha had proven himself strong. He had defeated another threatening alpha. It felt right to be tending to his wounds after the fact, ensconced in the safety of their den. It calls to a primal part of him.

He looks up at Hannibal's face through his lashes, still kneeling between his thighs. The alpha's dark eyes are hooded, he runs a hand over Will's hair. He rests his head on one muscular leg, letting Hannibal pet him. Positioned as he is, he can clearly smell the other man's building arousal. He slides a hand up the inside of his thigh, fingers playing for a moment with the hem of his underwear. Then he cups his hardening cock over the soft cotton.

Hannibal pushes up into his hand, breath hissing out between his teeth. Will can feel the heat and pulsing as he rubs over the organ. A wet spot appears on the fabric. Carefully, he pulls the waistband down. Hannibal lifts his hips to allow Will to slide them down his legs and all the way off.

Will kneels fully clothed before a nude Hannibal. He feels powerful. He is going to take care of his triumphant alpha. He kisses his hip bone. Then the inside of his thigh, teeth pressing lightly into the tender flesh there. Then he hovers over the alpha's penis, letting the

anticipation build up. He smiles slightly at the way Hannibal tries to keep his hips from arching, seeking contact with something.

The cock twitches as his breath hits it, a pearl of precome appearing on the tip. Will licks it off, the salty flavor bursting on his taste buds. He runs his tongue up the shaft. He pauses just below the head to flick the the tip of his tongue against the frenulum, eliciting a low groan from Hannibal. He wraps his lips around the head and sucks, enjoying the weight and feel of the cock in his mouth.

He takes more, getting halfway down the shaft before his gag reflex kicks in. He pulls back, the organ shiny with spit. He wraps a hand around it, pumping tightly from base to tip. He feels the knot pulse under his palm, and squeezes it back in response.

He goes down again, bobbing, fist wrapped tight around the base. Hannibal growls above him, and grips his head, fingers burrowing into his hair. He does not push him, only rests his hands there as if to steady himself.

Will hollows his cheeks and pulls hard. He feels the hands grip harder. The knot gives a warning throb and begins to inflate. Will swallows the first spurt of come, but it is soon overflowing his mouth. He pulls back, spend hitting his face and trickling down his chin.

Hannibal growls louder, eyes wild at seeing his mate marked in such a manner. Will grips the knot, other hand pumping to wring every drop out of the alpha. Hannibal lets go of his hair, fingers rubbing at the seed on Will's face. The omega wipes his mouth on his sleeve, knowing his shirt is a lost cause.

He stands, coaxing the alpha into their nest. He can feel the man's predatory eyes on him as he undresses. Slick has leaked through his underwear and pants, giving him even more laundry to do. He cleans himself up in the bathroom, returning and sliding into bed next to Hannibal.

He fusses with the blankets, arranging them more to his satisfaction around his mate. Hannibal pulls him in close, nose tucking into his neck to scent him. Gradually, he feels the other man relaxing, breathing becoming regular as he finally allows himself to rest.

Will looks at the clock. It is only early afternoon. It feels like the day has been much longer, so much happening in so little time. He is not tired, so carefully extracting an arm, he grabs a book of the bedside table. It's Perfume, the same book he had been looking at several weeks ago after Hannibal's party.

Thinking of the party makes Will realize how long it has been since he last had a heat. Sure, his illness had delayed his cycle, but he is completely fine now. Surely it would resume soon? He makes a mental note to make an appointment with his obgyn if it doesn't occur soon.

Hannibal shifts behind him, pressing his hips against will's backside as if he can sense his thoughts. Will smiles, feeling a small ache in his jaw. He lets his mate cuddle him as he reads. Someone tried to kill his mate today, but for right now, he feels content.

Wishin' to be Fishin'

Chapter Summary

Hannibal recovers from his attack.

Chapter Notes

Oh my gosh, in less than a month, this fic has gotten over 900 kudos! Thank you all so much! I'm so glad everyone is enjoying it.

Hannibal takes some time off from seeing patients. Will is concerned, but the man seems to be dealing well with the trauma. Will has never had to take a life, though it has come close a few times in the line of duty. (Including that one time he probably should have pulled the trigger, but wound up with a knife in the shoulder instead.) The doctor visits his psychiatrist, which Will is startled to learn he has. Hannibal tells him he started seeing one when he became a psychiatrist. Fair enough.

He cooks a lot. Of course he cooked a lot anyway, but he is now making far more than they could possibly eat. Will leaves baskets full of home baked muffins and scones in the staff room at Quantico. He himself has to loosen his belts a few notches. He recognizes that fixing food is a comfort reflex so he doesn't say anything.

They invite Alana, Jack, and Bella to dinner one night. Bella's face is slightly more drawn. Her head covered with a patterned scarf. There is a fire in her eyes, though, that says that she is far from giving up. Hannibal serves her silkie chicken broth that would sit easier on her stomach. Will had eaten some during his convalescence and has to admit as far as chicken soup goes, it's pretty superior.

Will can't remember the last time he had actually invited guests to his home (aside from Hannibal that is). It usually serves as his refuge away from people. But he knows Hannibal is a more social creature than himself, and he is comfortable enough with all of the invitees to not stress too much over letting them into his den. The evening is more pleasant than he expected. Even Jack manages to relax, letting work go for a night. His pleasure at seeing his wife enjoy herself is obvious. At the urging of their mates, Will and Bella attempt a rather bad rendition of The Entertainer on the piano, much to Alana's amusement. They all get set off when the dogs outside take up a howling chorus.

Will gets a hug from Alana on her way out. She whispers in his ear. "I'm so glad you two have each other."

“Me, too,” he says, looking softly at Hannibal. He turns back just in time to see her hide a flash of longing. He realizes abruptly that he can’t remember ever hearing about her dating anyone. He filed that away for further analysis later. Maybe it had been a bit insensitive to invite her to dinner with two mated couples.

When the second weekend of his hiatus off work comes around, Will half jokingly asks if Hannibal wants to go fishing with him instead of spending the day baking. To his surprise, Hannibal agrees and appears enthusiastic about the idea. It is somewhat surreal to see the man dressed in jeans and boots, looking like he stepped out of an LL Bean catalog. Will wonders if he can ever convince him to put on a pair of waders. The universe would probably implode.

They drive up to Shenandoah National Park, taking a cooler and picnic basket. It’s an actual basket, too, with a gingham blanket and everything. They leave as the sun is just breaking across the horizon in order to make a day of it.

They hike a little ways to the river, setting up on a fairly flat rock overhanging the water. It’s just high enough that Will’s toes can skim the surface when he sits on the edge. Hannibal admires Will’s many flies as he shows him how to bait the hook. He demonstrates a basic overhead cast, flicking the line back then over the water. After a few false starts, Hannibal gets the hang of it, body gracefully following through into an arcing cast.

They are mostly quiet, as fishermen tend to be. It’s a pleasant day. The beginnings of autumn giving the air a crisp quality and staining the leaves brilliant colors. The sunlight sparkles off the water. They enjoy the natural beauty, content to share it together.

Will pulls in a couple of good sized trout, stashing them in the cooler. Hannibal even manages to catch one, the startled look on his face priceless as it comes flopping up onto the ground. Will laughs and holds it so the other man can extract the hook.

They arrive back home at dusk, smelly and tired, but in good spirits. Hannibal watches closely as Will guts and cleans the fish with ease.

“You are very talented with a knife.”

“I’ve had a lot of practice. I’m not really one much for sport fishing.”

“You eat what you catch.”

“I try to. If the fish is a good enough size.”

“There is a picture on the mantelpiece of you as a child holding a fish nearly as big as you were.”

Will laughs. “Dad actually got that one mounted. I was so proud. It’s still hanging in his house.”

Hannibal looks thoughtful. “Does your father know about our change in living arrangements?”

“Yes. That reminds me, I’ve been meaning to ask if it’s alright with you if he stays with us during the holidays? I usually go down to Florida to visit, but I thought if you wanted to meet him it would be better if we host.”

“Of course, I would be happy to meet your father.” He gains a far away look. “It has been a long time since I have spent the holidays with family.”

Will is quiet. Hannibal rarely speaks about his upbringing. Will does not push, knowing if there is something painful or tragic then Hannibal will tell him in his own time. He does not seem inclined to speak anymore on the subject at the moment so Will returns to the previous topic.

“Some of my earliest memories are of fishing with my dad. He made sure I knew how to clean a fish. I’ve got a scar on my left palm from learning the hard way how sharp a good fish gutting knife is.”

“Perhaps I should start recruiting you to help me prepare meals in the future. Knife skills are a valuable contribution.”

They dine that night on blackened trout, roasted asparagus, and baked sweet potatoes. It’s simpler than Hannibal’s usual fare, but there is satisfaction in eating meat that they provided together. Will lets the dogs out the back door after they clean up, watching them run around the yard in the moonlight. Hannibal comes up behind him, wrapping his arms around him, a warmth against the chilly air.

But the quiet time together cannot last. Hannibal returns to work the following Monday. A week after that, Will gets another call from Jack with a case.

Counting Bodies Like Sheep

Chapter Summary

Murder totem. Also Will and Alana have a heart to heart.

Chapter Notes

I am rapidly catching up to where I currently am with writing. I guess I should probably write more so I don't get too far behind :/

Will has seen a lot of messed up shit. He has seen a human torso cut out of an alligator stomach. He has seen a man killed via plunger to the face. Not to mention some of the bizarre stuff that washes up in the case files at the FBI. But the human totem pole takes the horrible, deranged cake in terms of Fucked Up Shit.

It must have taken years to collect the “materials”. Years of some invisible killer ending lives with no repercussions, just a lost friend or family member disappearing without a trace. Will feels a righteous anger burn inside of him. Only two of the victims were actually important to the killer, the top and the bottom. The rest were just...convenient. Fodder for his power complex.

Will opens his eyes, jaw set and walks over to where Jack and Beverly are standing. Zeller is snapping pictures, while Price helps coordinate the deconstruction crew. As he reaches the two agents a strong wind blows in from the sea.

The smell of decay hits him at full force. There is a lurch in his midsection. Clamping a hand over his mouth, he stumbles a few steps away and loses the contents of his stomach. *Oh, God, why,* he thinks distantly.

A hand pats his back as he gives a few more heaves,only bringing up bile. A water bottle is thrust into his hand. Rinsing his mouth out, he looks up to see Beverly standing beside him. Jack and the other team members stand at a distance, looking concerned. He straightens up shakily.

“Will, are you alright?” Jack asks.

“Fine now.” And it’s true. He’s a little weak from the vomiting, but he doesn’t feel bad aside from that.

“Happens to everyone at some point,” Price says cheerfully. “I remember this one time I was brought this body that had spent three weeks soaking in-”

“Okay, that’s enough.” Jack thankfully interrupts.

“I haven’t puked at a crime scene since I was a rookie cop.” Will is perturbed.

“Well, this is pretty bad,” Beverly says with a grim look to the tower of cadavers.

“You don’t think the encephalitis is coming back do you?” Jack asks, his stare a laser focus.

“No, that’s completely cleared up. Maybe it’s a bug? I can work, I really do feel fine now.”

“If you’re sure.”

“Yes.”

“Good. Now, what do you see?”

It has become Will’s habit to base his class lectures around whatever case he is currently working on. It gives the students a peek into the profiling process and helps him organize his thoughts. He clicks through the slides of the totem pole victims, post and pre mortem. He gets to the last one.

“Joel Summers - killed by a single stab to the heart. Presented with great ostentation atop a display of all the previous victims. This killer’s design was to never be discovered. A ghost. That is what excited him. Until now... Why is he coming into the light?” That is the real question that is bothering him. This monster had gotten away with murder for years. This felt like a finale, but why? What had happened?

He is still brooding on it when the class ends. Alana comes in, smiling at him.

“Hey, I have some free time between patients. Want to get lunch?”

“Hannibal packed me something, but he always gives me way too much if you want to split it.”

“I wouldn't say no to that.”

They sit in his office, eating out of the fancy segmented tupperware boxes Hannibal uses. Will had dug around in his desk and found a plastic fork leftover from some take away place for Alana to use.

“How’s Hannibal doing?”

“Better, I think. It can be hard to tell sometimes with him.”

“Someone hiding their feelings? From you?” She teases.

“It’s different with Hannibal. It’s hard to date someone when you notice everything they do and have a pretty good idea why they do it. That’s partly why I rarely did it before I mated. But Hannibal’s more...elusive.”

“Worse than dating a psychiatrist is being a psychiatrist dating.”

“Is that your excuse?”

She blinks. “For what?”

“For not dating.”

“Why are you assuming I don’t date?”

“Do you?”

She sighs. “No, not really. Feels like something for somebody else. I’m sure I’ll become that somebody someday but right now I think too much.”

“Are you going to try to think less or wait until it happens naturally?”

“I haven’t thought about it.” She grins ruefully. “When did we switch roles? It used to be me poking you about your love life.”

“I guess when I actually acquired a love life.”

She looks down, fiddling with her fork. “I want to be honest with you.”

Will looks at her in surprise. “I hope you feel you can always be honest with me.”

“I...used to have feelings for you.”

“Ah.” Will sets down his fork and leans back in his chair.

“You knew?”

“No, but i noticed you used to avoid being alone with me. You were very smooth about it.”

“Evidently not smooth enough.”

“I thought it was me.”

“No! Well, yes, but not the way you think. Aside from society’s views on beta-omega pairings, the way I am in relationships-I wouldn’t be good for you. You wouldn’t be good for me. “We” wouldn’t be good for either of us. So I kept you at a distance.”

“You stopped avoiding me after I mated.” Will realizes.

“It was...safer, then. And the feelings faded after a while. I knew I could just be your friend.”

“I’m glad to have you as one.” He debates asking the next question. “Just out of curiosity, why do you think you would have been bad for me?”

“I wouldn’t be able to stop analyzing. I have a professional curiosity about you.”

“I appreciate your restraint.”

She smiles, and then reaches out and hugs him. He returns it, the pleasant smell of her light perfume a welcome sign of support and friendship.

Getting Away with Murder

Chapter Summary

> Will is not a happy graham cracker at the conclusion of the Murder Totem case. He and Bella have an Omega's Day. (Like a Girl's Day, but with more fictional genders)

Chapter Notes

> This chapter is a little longer than usual. I would have split it up, but the Murder Totem conclusion wasn't long enough to warrant it's own chapter.

Will and Jack stand before the sad, twisted little man who got away with murdering seventeen people until he decided to give himself up. The anger burns in Will's throat, and he can tell that Jack is just barely restraining himself. At least they can lay the facts out. Take the smug look off the killer's face with the truth of his actions.

"You didn't secure your legacy, Mr. Wells, you murdered it."

"Your only act as a father was to destroy your son."

They take him in, silent and unresisting. Will goes home to Hannibal that night, still shaking with impotent rage.

"Seventeen people," He says to Hannibal, "and his son. He let them be discovered on his terms. A lifetime of silent destruction. It makes me sick."

It really does, too. He had to excuse himself from the meal Hannibal had made, because even the smell of it was making his stomach roil. He stretches out on the recliner, Buster has hopped up into his lap. He idly scratches him behind the ears.

"It is a sad facet of the world that such monsters exist." Hannibal offers him some herbal tea. "You do your best, Will, to hunt them down. But you cannot catch them all."

Will accepts the cup, staring down at the steaming, greenish liquid. "I know, I do. It just wears on me."

Hannibal sits down in what has become 'his' chair. It's an elegant wingback that he probably got at some antique auction. It looks a bit incongruent with the rest of the decor, but Will has been noticing other things like that slipping in: small bronze statue put on the shelf, a carved

frame mirror hung in the bedroom, insanely high thread count sheets gracing the bed. Little bits of Hannibal's personal style finding its way into the house, making it *their* home instead of just Will's.

"Have you given any more thought to switching careers?"

Will sighs. "What else am I suited for?"

"Plenty, Will. You are a highly intelligent and adaptive individual. You could even go back to school to pursue some entirely new field if you so choose."

"I think I'll pass on that. I've spent enough time teaching to not want to be back in a class." He sips his tea. "What made you choose psychiatry when you quit being a surgeon?"

"It was a close choice for me in university either way, so it made sense to go into the other field when I found the first no longer suited me."

Will thinks back to when he was a child, he can remember going through a fanciful amount of jobs whenever anyone asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up. He thinks veterinarian was in there somewhere, but the older he got 'Policeman' seemed to be his answer more and more.

Buster rolls over, and Will rubs his belly. "Maybe I should just give into the inevitable and open a dog sanctuary."

"Is that not what you are now?" Hannibal asks, amused.

"I could just spend my days driving around looking for stray dogs."

"Isn't that what animal control is for?"

"No. They take the animals to those awful kill shelters. I would rehabilitate them."

Hannibal looks thoughtful at that. "What about therapy animals? You're pack is quite well trained. I would say that you could easily apply for a licence. There maybe some course work involved. Support animals can help a lot of people, especially those who have experienced trauma."

Will stares down at the little terrier in his lap, mulling the suggestion over. It sounded...nice. Soothing. Working with animals and helping people. It is so different than what he is used to. He thinks back to all the victims he has seen, family members left behind. He continued in the field to give them justice. But justice can be a cold comfort when a loved one is in the ground.

"I'll think about it."

It starts snowing that night and continues throughout the week. Will's general queasiness abates some, so he marks it down to a stomach bug. That on top of the seasonal change over has left him feeling tired a lot. Oftentimes when he gets back from Quantico, he'll curl up with the dogs in front of the heater and nap. The first time Hannibal came home and saw this,

he took a picture which he then got framed and now has sitting on his office desk, much to Will's embarrassment.

Bella does another round of chemo, but her doctors are optimistic. The treatment has severely reduced the growth in her lungs. They tell her if it continues to shrink, they will remove the rest through surgery.

She asks Will to go with her to do some holiday shopping. She leans on his arm as they make their way through an Art and Crafts fair in D.C. They pause to examine a stained glass stand.

"I have no idea what I'm going to get Hannibal for Christmas."

Bella smiles at him and pats his hand. "I remember having the same problem the first year Jack and I were together."

"What did you end up getting him?"

"I had a friend take some risque pictures, and put them in a card." She winks while Will splutters out his laugher. "The military was pretty strict about courtship rules back then. I had to give the poor man something for those lonely nights."

"I don't think that would work for me."

"No, Dr. Lecter seems more the type to want you to pose while he draws you."

"Oh, god, don't give him ideas."

"Well, you don't want to end up with some magi gift." She pats her turbine covered head. "I'm exempt from that this year."

He squeezes her hand in sympathy. "What are you getting Jack?"

"We have a tradition. I always get him some little desk ornament. He keeps them in his office at home. And he always gets me a novelty mug."

"You must have a lot of mugs."

"I started planting flowers in them."

They continue on through the fair. Bella finds a glass paperweight that looks like a coral reef in a bubble. Will gets his dad a carving of a jumping fish, but nothing catches his eye for Hannibal until he finds a booth selling hand turned pens.

He hovers over the display case, there is one with a feathered pattern on the barrel and silver fixtures. He asks the artist if he can see it.

She hands it to him and it is heavy in his hand. The cap twists off to reveal it is a fountain pen.

“I can throw in a box holder for half off if you want that one.” The artists says, eager to make a sale. He nods.

“And two ink refills, if you don’t mind.”

The two omegas leave the fair, worn out but pleased with their finds.

He helps Bella into her house and sits down for a cup of coffee. She pulls out her medical marijuana vaporizer, taking a long pull. She sits back with a sigh.

“If I knew getting stoned was this much fun, I’d have gone to more parties in college.”

Will chuckles. “I can’t believe some of my students who show up thinking I won’t notice they’ve been partaking. You want to work for the FBI, for god’s sake.”

“You want to try it?”

Probably not a great idea to get high at my boss’s house, with my boss’s mate.”

“He does, sometimes.”

“No, really?”

“He gets giggly.”

“I can’t even imagine.”

“Mhmm. One of the girls from work brought us a casserole one night. He ate almost all of it with a spoon right out of the pan.”

Will laughs so hard his stomach hurts. Bella grins hugely. “Then he couldn’t remember the next morning! I asked him if he thought raccoons ate it, because I sure as hell couldn’t eat a whole casserole myself.”

Just then the door opened, revealing the man himself. The two omegas look at him and bust up laughing again. Jack is taken aback, he opens his mouth to say something, but seems to think better of it.

“You know what? I’d rather not know.”

“Probably for the best, dear.” They share a brief kiss, he nods to Will, grabs a beer out of the fridge, and leaves them to their conversation.

Will says once he’s gone, wiping tears from his eyes, “Well it was nice of your co-worker to bring you food, anyway.”

“It’s a trend with social workers and case workers. The good ones want to take care of everybody all the time.” Bella had helped found and run a shelter for victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault. The organization now has branches all over the east coast.

“Do you all ever use therapy dogs?” He asks.

She furrows her brow. “I don’t think we have in the past, but it sounds like a good idea. Are any of your dogs registered? That Winston is a real sweetheart.”

“I was thinking about it.”

“Well, let me know. And if you ever want to go by the office, please do. Jack might not want me to steal you away, but we need all the good people we can get.”

Awake and Alive

Chapter Summary

Will gets another unexpected visitor.

Delaware is fucking cold. Will pulls his beanie more firmly over his ears, and tucks his hands under his armpits. The farmhouse seems big and empty. It's sole occupant lying on the floor in a pool of her own blood mixed with the steady drip of melting snow.

He takes in the smashed pictures, the way the killer had tried to peel back her face. He frowns. Usually he would say this indicates rage, but that's not really what he's pulling from the scene. There's more...fear, maybe even betrayal. Desperation. Not unlike Buddish. Is this killer also dying?

He goes to the window, looking out across the frozen and. At the tree line he thinks he sees a flicker of movement. He leaves the forensic team to their analysis and goes outside, crossing under the police tape. He gets to the edge of the forest, not quite sure what he is looking for. He steps in. There are human footprints in the frost covered underbrush. Someone comes up behind him.

"You see something?"

He looks up at Jack. "Do the local force have any tracking dogs?"

They do but there is not enough of a scent for them to pick up. Luckily, a dna test on the skin found under Beth LeBeau's fingernails turns up a match in the database for Georgia Madchen.

They bring in her mother, a tired woman, beatdown by life and hardship. She speaks in a weary voice, eyes constantly on the edge of breaking. Will feels for the woman, but more than that his heart breaks for Georgia. The world is cruel to the neuro atypical. What must it be like to feel dead? To be surrounded by impostors? To not recognize your own face, much less your loved ones? He understands that terror and betrayal that drove her to inadvertently kill her best friend.

He goes back home in a disquieted mood, going through the motions of letting the dogs out and refilling their water dishes. They come back wet, muddy messes, so he has to break out the towels and hairdryer. Most of the dogs are used to the loud whirring noise by now, but Harley, his boxer mix gets skittish. Being one of the strongest of the bunch, it can be a challenge to get him to hold still. Luckily his hair is short and sleek. Not so with some of the others. Max's possible collie background makes him absorb water like a sponge then puff up when blow dried.

He's exhausted once he gets through the grooming ritual, and smelling strongly of wet canine. He trudges upstairs, dogs following at his heels. It had taken some serious negotiation to lift Hannibal's 'no dogs in the bedroom' policy to just 'no dogs on the bed'.

Grabbing a pair of sweats, he is about to head into the bathroom to give himself a wash when he stops at the low growl rising from the pack. He stares, alarmed at the raised hackles, eyes following the direction of the pointed noses to below the bed. Slowly, he lowers himself to peer under.

Sunken, deadened eyes stare back at him.

He freezes, biting back the instinct to yell and scramble away from this childhood nightmare, forcing himself to observe instead. The eyes aren't threatening, they're scared. The grey, sagging face covered with diseased skin. The growling rises sharply.

"Tsst. Stop." He orders without looking away. He slowly crawls closer.

"I see you, Georgia." She pulls deeper into the shadows under the mattress

He projects soothing pheromones. According to her medical records, she is a beta, but there is evidence that omega scents can positively affect the mood of all genders, likely due to their biological role as childbearers.

"Think of who you are." Wide and unblinking she watches him inch toward her. "It's seven o'clock. You are in Wolf Trap, Virginia."

He reaches a hand out, palm up. "Your name is Georgia Madchen. You are not alone. We're here together."

He waits. The moment seems to hang in the air for an eternity. Then, a quiet, rasping voice.

"Am I alive?"

He lets out a shaky breath. "Yes. Georgia. You are alive."

They stay like that for a long time, his hand curled tightly around hers, soothing her with quiet words. The dogs pile up around him, Winston actually wriggling under the bed to lay beside the sick girl. She startles a bit, but allows the animal to get close to her. Eventually her grip grows lax and her breathing, though still slightly laboured, slows and deepens.

Gently, he lays down her hand and stands, body protesting spending so much time on the hardwood floor. He looks to the doorway. Hannibal stands there, gripping the frame so tightly his knuckles are white. Will is sure the only thing keeping him from charging in is the abundance of calming pheromones in the room.

"An ambulance has been dispatched and Jack is on his way." Hannibal's voice is remarkably calm despite his tension.

"Thank you." Will whispers, going to him. Hannibal's arms are gentle as they wrap around him, as if he is afraid the omega might break.

“Remarkable boy. You would stare death in the face and force it to blink first.”

“She is just an ill, frightened child, Hannibal.”

“One who brutally killed a woman. She is dangerous. All the more so because she is not in her right mind.”

Will is saved having to answer by the sound of someone pulling up outside. A glance out the window tells him it is the paramedics, as well as a police officer.

“Would you show them up, please?” He is about to argue when Hannibal adds. “I believe you can best explain the situation.”

The officer is one of the same ones who had come when Gideon had broken in. She stands with Will and Hannibal as the medical personnel gently coax Georgia out.

“You have an interesting life, Agent Graham.” The policewoman says.

“It’s a talent.” Hannibal makes a low noise that Will cannot identify at that.

Georgia is led away without too much trouble. Will has to hold Winston back from following her into the ambulance. He calls Jack and lets him know where she’s being taken and that he’ll have a report written up for him in the morning.

He goes back into the house to find Hannibal setting the table, some pasta dish on the stove. He sits down at his place, feeling emotionally drained and knowing that the night is far from over.

Talk to Me

Chapter Summary

Hannibal is concerned. Will is surprised.

The pair are quiet as they eat their meal and wash up. By tacit agreement they move out to the living room, taking their seats and angling them toward each other. The dogs settle in their pile in front of the heater, worn out from all the excitement and oblivious to the tension between the two humans.

“Will she recover?” Will asks.

Hannibal sighs. “Physically, it is hard to say. There is likely a high risk of infection. They will have to check her vital fluids and see how much damage she suffered wandering out in the elements. Due to the condition of her epidermis, she will have to be treated like a burn victim.”

“What about mentally?”

“If given stable treatment for Cotard’s Syndrome, she can recover to a manageable lifestyle. Though in a case as extreme as hers, electroconvulsive may be needed.”

“Managing expectations.” Will remembers what the girl’s mother had said about mental illness.

“Unfortunately that is often the case.”

“I guess the state will be paying for her treatment now.”

“If it would ease your mind, I can see if I can pull a few strings and get her the care she needs.”

Will looks up. “You would do that?”

“For you, yes.”

“I thought you were angry.”

“Concerned, Will. And yes, upset, I will confess to that. But it is not Ms. Madchen herself that is troubling me, as you said she is simply a young woman with an illness. It is what she represented. Your work is putting you in potentially harmful situations.”

“I work for the FBI, Hannibal. It comes with a certain amount of risk. I knew that when I agreed to start doing field work again.”

“I realize that, but this instance was not in the field. Nor was Gideon. This is our home. How did Ms. Madchen find the house? How did she get here from Delaware? I doubt she walked. Not that distance in her condition.”

Will’s brow furrows. “That is a good question.”

“There is someone else at work here that does not have your interests at heart.”

“What you think there’s some kind of conspiracy?”

“One killer finding his way to your house could be a coincidence. Gideon, even in his dissociative state was highly intelligent. He may have been able to look up the address. Two, however, is a pattern.”

“But Georgia didn’t mean me any harm!”

“She could have, Will!” He doesn’t think he has ever seen Hannibal so agitated. He runs a hand through his hair, messing up his usual smooth locks.

“Hey.” Will sends some conciliatory pheromones his way. Hannibal takes a deep breath, regaining his composure.

“It is not just your own safety that you need to be concerned about anymore, Will.” The alpha says quietly.

Will grimaces. “I know, I’m sorry. I guess I did end up dragging you into my world after all.”

“I don’t refer to myself.” His gaze dips meaningfully to Will’s midsection. The omega blinks, looking down in astonishment.

“What-”

“Surely you must have noticed.” An almost amused expression gracing his face for a fraction of a second.

Will thinks back over the last few months. In all honesty he probably should have put the signs together. His late heat that he had attributed to stress. The tightening of his pants that he had put down to a regular diet of good food courtesy of Hannibal. The vomiting and nausea...Yeah, he probably should have caught on by now.

“Oh.”

“I switched from wine to mineral water with our meals several weeks ago.”

“Why didn’t you say anything?”

“I assumed you would tell me when you were ready.”

He peels up his t-shirt (still wrinkled from where it dried wet and he'd lain on the floor.) to peer at his stomach. There is a very slight pooch there. A warm hand spans across it, and he looks into Hannibal's eyes where the alpha is now kneeling in front of him.

"I suspect you are about three months along."

"Three months." He stares harder at his abdomen as if he can see through the skin just by squinting. 'How did you know?"

"Aside from your increased lethargy and nausea, I can smell it."

"Of course you can."

"Soon even those without my olfactory sensitivity will be able to. Pregnant omegas have a very distinctive scent that increases dramatically in the second trimester."

"The happy, glowy, pregnant pheromones."

"It is a protective reflex for the bearer and child."

"Yeah, dope up any potential threats."

Hannibal frowns at him. "Be that as it may, it might be prudent to completely avoid potential threats, which brings us back to our original topic."

"Are you asking me to stop working?" Will asks in disbelief.

"Of course not, Will, but you are already considering changing careers. I am just asking you to please prioritize your safety and that of our child if you absolutely feel you must continue field work. If you believe there is someone in the house who should not be here, leave and call the police."

Our child. He thinks dizzily. *Mine and Hannibal's.* "Okay."

"Yes? And no more confronting suspects?"

"I'll tell Jack that I'm strictly consulting from now on. I won't even go to crime scenes."

Hannibal rests his head on Will's lap, arms hugging around his hips, as if cradling the bump of his abdomen. "Thank you."

Will runs a hand through his hair, gently petting the soft salt and pepper locks. "I guess I'll need to make a doctor's appointment."

"The Medstar Franklin Square Medical Center has a highly rated obstetric department."

"Of course you've already looked into it. You're going to be one of those clingy, hovering alphas, aren't you?"

"I prefer loving and concerned mate."

“I’m surprised you haven’t been slipping me prenatal vitamins and restricting my coffee.”

“Well-” Hannibal shifts back.

“No.”

“I may have been serving you an increasingly decaffeinated ratio.”

“No wonder I’ve been so tired.”

“That’s still likely from the pregnancy. Honestly, you consume so much coffee I doubt you even feel the effects of the caffeine anymore. The act of drinking it in the morning to wake up is more of a placebo effect.”

“Which you have now ruined by telling me. And the vitamins?”

“I make sure you get all the nutrients the baby needs for healthy development in my meals.” He sniffs as if Will had insinuated that his cooking is lacking.

Will breathes out. “This is really happening.”

Hannibal smiles, taking him by the hands and pulling him out of the seat. He presses his forehead against his. Will inhales his familiar scent. It still reminds him of all his favorite things. It smells like home.

“We’re having a baby.”

You're So Vain

Chapter Summary

And now Chilton.

As often as Will's thoughts drift to the life developing inside of him, there are some loose ends with the BAU that needed to be cleaned up before he feels he can satisfactorily move on to a new chapter in his life. Namely how his house seems to have become a magnet for murderers.

The topic is brought to the forefront when Abel Gideon, recovered from his gunshot, files a malpractice lawsuit against the director of the BSHCI. Will, Hannibal,and Alana gather in Jack's office to go over transcripts from Gideon's interviews and Chilton's notes.

"Chilton consulted on some of the Ripper's earlier murders. He could have implanted the details into Gideon's mind through psychic driving." Alana says.

"Do you believe Dr. Chilton is the one who gave Gideon Will's information?" Hannibal asks.

Jack answers. "It's a possibility we're considering. Gideon had very limited contact with anyone else prior to his escape, and Chilton has expressed some...intense opinions about Will in the past."

They all look at Will. "I met him briefly at the opening of the Evil Minds Research Museum. Apparently he had heard of me and wanted to discuss my 'unique cocktail of personality disorders and neuroses'."

"He didn't." Alana looks horrified. "Actually, I've met him. I can absolutely see him doing that."

"I brushed him off, but he hassled me with emails and phone calls for a few months after. I ignored them and they eventually tapered off."

"You never mentioned this before." Hannibal shifts in his chair as if he wants to reach out, but stops himself in the professional setting.

"He's not the first overeager researcher I've had to fend off. I'm told I'm quite the topic of conversation in psychiatric circles."

The two psychiatrists exchange a moderately guilty look. Will waves their concern away.

"I know you two respect me as a person enough not to discuss me with your peers." *Also I know where you sleep at night.* He wisely does not add that last bit out loud in the middle of

the FBI headquarters.

“So far Chilton has steadfastly denied any hint that he performed psychic driving as part of Gideon’s therapy. But the entire situation has left him under intense scrutiny and not just from us. There is talk by the board of directors of the hospital to replace him.” Jack says.

“There have been whispers for years that he has been mistreating the inmates, but nothing substantial has ever been proven.” Hannibal adds.

“Most people are content as long as they don’t have to think about those who end up there.” says Alana.

“Well, we’re thinking about them now.” Jack says grimly. “But we need more evidence.”

Which is how Will ends up sitting in Hannibal’s house in Baltimore having dinner with three psychiatrists.

Hannibal has forgone his usual spot at the head of the table, opting for symmetry, instead. He and Will on one side of the table, Chilton and Alana on the other.

Chilton seems oblivious to the tension in Will and Alana. It is a relief when Hannibal sweeps in with the food.

“Inspired by Auguste Escoffier, Langue d’agneau en Papillotte served with a sauce of duxelle and oyster mushrooms, picked myself.”

Alana smiles, relaxing minutely. “Don’t think I’ve ever had tongue.”

Hannibal drops her a wink. “It was a particularly chatty lamb.”

“Romans would kill flamingos just to eat their tongues.” Chilton folds his napkin and places it on his lap, looking impressed at the spread.

“Don’t give me ideas. Your tongue is very feisty and as this evening has already proven, it’s nice to have an old friend for dinner.” Will doesn’t think he imagines the subtonal growl in the words, for all the alpha’s tone is light.

Will picks up his glass, filled with sparkling white grape juice indistinguishable by sight from the wine the rest of the party is drinking.

“I do hope you are recovered from that dreadful business a few weeks ago, Mister Graham. Or is it Mister Lecter now?”

“It’s Graham.” He says woodenly. “And I am perfectly fine. Georgia Madchen was just a sick girl.”

“Still, must have given you a fright, another killer breaking into your home. I am so sorry about Gideon. Rest assured, the security on him has been greatly increased.”

“I’m sure I’ll sleep soundly at night.”

“Is Gideon still having delusions of being the Ripper?”

Chilton sighs theatrically. “It comes and goes. I am man enough to admit I made a mistake with Gideon. If only I had been more curious about the common mind. I don’t know how you two do it.” He directs to Alana and Hannibal. “Though I suppose you find your own sources of intellectual stimulation.” His eyes drift over to Will, who ignores him in favor of studiously cutting the meat on his plate.

Out of the corner of his eye he sees Hannibal’s knuckles tighten at the insinuation. Alana swoops in. “What would you have done differently with Gideon?”

“Well, I certainly would have reexamined some of his more outrageous claims. I confess to some guilt about the poor night nurse. If I had not inadvertently encouraged his delusions, she might yet live.”

“Inadvertently.” Will says flatly.

“You discussed the Ripper’s crimes with Gideon?” Hannibal asks.

“Just to test my mistaken suspicions.”

“Is it possible you *inadvertently* planted the suggestion in Gideon’s mind that he was the Ripper?” Alana does a good job of hiding the bite in her question, but Will catches it. He suppresses a smirk.

“Not suggesting coercive persuasion?” Chilton’s demeanor shifts to one of professional outrage. “Psychic driving is unethical.”

“But reasonable in certain circumstances.” Hannibal says. The other three look at him.

“What circumstances?” Alana sounds taken aback.

“It may’ve been useful trying to remind Gideon he’s the Chesapeake Ripper if he repressed those memories, unfortunately that turned out not to be the case.”

Will tried not to snort into his dinner. Anyone with half a brain could see that Gideon wasn’t the Ripper. Chilton is an awful man with an authority complex, basking in his power over his so called patients at the hospital. His (likely hamfisted) mental experiments led him to a false conclusion, and, like the glory hound he is, he jumped all over it. Will certainly hopes this misstep does spell the man’s professional downfall. He has abused his position long enough.

Hannibal asks for Chilton’s help with dessert, leaving Will and Alana in the dining room.

“What is he up to?” She asks Will in a low voice.

“Which one?”

“Hannibal.”

“A variation on good cop, bad cop, I think. He’s gaining Chilton’s trust.”

“Will it work?”

“I hope so. I’d hate to think I endured dinner with that man for nothing.”

Chilton leaves, thanking Hannibal for the meal and wrangling heavily to an invite to his next dinner party. Hannibal noncommittally bids him goodnight. The three remaining participants then gather in Hannibal’s library, and strip off their hidden recording devices.

“Did he give anything away while you were alone?” Alana asks.

“He admitted to the use of psychic driving, as well as other unethical procedures. It will be enough to get his license revoked.”

“Nothing about mentioning me to Gideon?”

“No. I am sorry, Will. Perhaps something will turn up when they search his notes, as will undoubtedly happen when the BSHCI board hears of this.”

“He’s going to be made a scapegoat for their negligence.” Alana is fuming.

“A scapegoat would imply that he is innocent, which we know he is far from being. Let us hope the next director can take the hospital in a more positive direction.”

“Yes.” There is a sudden gleam in Alana’s eye. “Let’s hope.”

What to Expect

Chapter Summary

Will has some appointments and deals with some of the logistics of pregnancy.

The news of Chilton's disgraced resignation reaches Will as he is preparing his final exams in late November. In an effort to keep the scandal as quiet as possible, the doctor was forced to resign by the state. Hannibal and Alana, for their part in gathering evidence against him, were asked to help sort through his patient notes and conduct interviews with the staff and inmates. The extra work meant Hannibal had to spend even longer hours in Baltimore, sometimes unable to make it back to Wolf Trap at night.

The separation is affecting the expecting omega more than he would have guessed. As his hormone levels change, more primitive needs rise up inside of him. Will wants nothing more than to spend his days ensconced in his den with his mate and pack.

He walks around his house, scent marking the walls, and moving objects around. He can't help but feel slightly ridiculous, but if he doesn't he'll feel twitchy and restless all day. Leaving the house is getting harder, and he is relieved that the semester is coming to an end. Already he has submitted to take a sabbatical in the spring semester, though he is debating whether or not to simply resign once it is up.

It's a scary step to take, but the more he thinks about it, the more attractive it seems. He doesn't really need the money. He lives a pretty frugal life by habit and has a nice savings account. Not to mention since Hannibal has moved in he's managed to take over more than his share of the household expenses.

And it would leave him plenty of time to spend with his new child. He had never considered that one day he might be a house omega, but he would rather spend his pup's first few years of life taking care of them himself. Since he is planning to change careers anyway, why not resign now?

He sets the thought away to discuss with Hannibal later. There is something else, job wise, he needs to do first, which he has been dreading. It's time to visit Jack.

"Pregnant." Jack sags back in his office chair.

"Yes. So you understand why I can't do field work anymore."

"But you are still willing to consult?"

"Pictures only, Jack. I might come into the lab if necessary, but I don't plan to go much anywhere besides my house and the hospital in the coming months."

“And after the baby’s born?”

Will sighs. He knew Jack wouldn’t let this go easily. “I’ve been thinking about leaving for a while, Jack. I don’t want a job where I have to worry about darkness following me home.”

The older alpha rubs his face. “I don’t blame you for that, especially with recent events. Alright, no more field work, but I won’t promise that I won’t ask for your help in the future, Will. You are the only one who can do what you do.”

“That might be true, but there are plenty of other gifted profilers out there. Some of them might even pass the FBI’s screening procedures.” Yeah, he might still be a little bitter about that.

“Oh, I always have my eye out for new talent. Now get out of here, I’ve got reports to write, and you’ve got exams to give.”

Will nods, standing to leave. He gets to the door when Jack calls after him.

“And congratulations.”

No matter how busy Hannibal is, he always finds time to go with Will to his doctor’s appointments. As much as he appreciates the alpha’s dedication, this is not always a good thing. Hannibal can be quite overbearing, and he is especially protective of his mate and unborn child. The doctor is not above using his influence and bearing to attempt to intimidate Will’s medical retinue.

Will is fairly certain the nurses draw lots when his appointments come up.

“Please don’t argue with Dr. Sevi today.” He tells his mate as they wait in the small office.

“I did not argue with him. I simply disagreed with his assessment of your blood pressure level.” Hannibal has the gall to sound miffed, as if Will was the one being unreasonable.

“He’s the obstetrician, Hannibal, not you. If he says it’s not high enough to worry about, I believe him.” God save him from pushy alphas with medical degrees.

“I still think we should be monitoring it daily. Twice daily to be safe.”

“If you keep working yourself up, you are gonna be the one with high blood pressure.” And possibly a fist to the face.

The alpha doesn’t get a chance to answer (which is probably just as well) because the doctor comes in at that moment, carting the ultrasound instruments.

“All right parents. Let’s see how the little one is doing.”

In spite of their disagreement, Will takes Hannibal’s hand as the gel is squirted onto his growing baby bump. The first ultrasound had left the two breathless at the sound of their pup’s heartbeat. Their eyes are glued to the screen now as the wand is moved around Will’s abdomen.

“Ok, here’s the head. There’s an arm and hand. Let’s see if we can determine a primary sex.”

Will’s hand grips Hannibal’s even tighter. They had talked about keeping the primary gender a mystery, but decided they both couldn’t wait the rest of the pregnancy to find out.

“Congratulations. It looks like you are having a girl.”

Will doesn’t realize there are tears running down his face until Hannibal wipes them away with his thumbs, cradling his head. The doctor tactfully gives them some privacy, quickly wiping away the gel and busying himself with print outs.

“A girl.” Will’s face feels like it’s about to split open from smiling so wide.

“A daughter. *Tu padovanojai man tokią dovaną, mylimasis.* .” There are tears glistening in Hannibal’s eyes, too.

“I don’t know what that means, but I’m assuming it’s good.”

“Yes.” The alpha’s voice sounds rough. Will is crying and smiling, and certain that he must look like a complete idiot, but at this moment he doesn’t care.

He has a family.

Papa Don't Preach

Chapter Summary

Will's father comes for the holidays.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Will almost wished he had taken up Hannibal's offer of flying his father up in a private jet as they stand in the middle of the Ronald Reagan Washington National airport a week before Christmas. He can physically feel the germs coming off the surrounding travellers. Pressing closer to Hannibal's side as the crush of humanity swarms around them, he wishes he at least had a medical mask to wear. *And possibly a neon 'keep away' sign* , he thinks as another woman stops to coo at his stomach.

His scent has changed now, and is noticeable even to betas. His bump is not so obvious underneath his heavy winter clothes, but that doesn't stop people he doesn't know from wanting to touch him. Hannibal has had to actually growl at two omegas who didn't seem to understand Will's reluctance to answer their increasingly invasive questions while they tried to pat his midsection.

"I thought 'the pregnant omega happy vibes' is suppose to be a defense mechanism. It seems to be attracting people."

"A protective measure, my dear. It decreases aggression. Though I agree with your sentiment, It is impolite to touch anyone without their permission, much less an expectant bearer."

"Is Dad's plane here yet?" Pregnancy has also heightened his sense of smell to possibly beyond Hannibal's ability. He is not enjoying the resulting influx of information. Humanity smells terrible. Especially in large groups. That are worn out from travelling. It's just as well he gave up field work, there is no way Jack would be able to convince him to get on a plane right now.

"I believe he just landed at Gate 15." They make their way over to the baggage claim, where they had agreed to meet him. Despite his misery at the venue, Will begins to perk up, excited to see his father. It had been a whole year, and as always he is struck with guilt that they don't visit more often. Well, at least he has a hell of a Christmas surprise for him this year.

"Will!" The omega turns to see the ball-capped head of Robert Graham pushing through the crowd toward him. He leaves Hannibal's side, rushing over to embrace his father in a bearhug.

Logically, he knows his father isn't the tallest or broadest man. In fact, he had shrunk a little in the last few years. In Will's eyes, though he is still the gentle giant of his childhood, bending down to help him bait a hook or turn a screw.

"It's good to see you, boy." The older alpha says into his curls. He inhales and pulls back, eyes wide.

Will smiles nervously. "Surprise?"

"It sure as hell is. How far along are ya?"

"Almost five months."

His father's eyebrows lift. "And you're just now letting me know?"

"To be fair, I didn't even know until three months in."

His dad snorts. "Sounds about right. Always knows everything about everybody, but clueless when it comes to yourself."

Will certainly does not pout. He is a grown ass man, not a teenager, goddamnit.

His father grabs his duffel off the conveyer belt and Will leads him over to where Hannibal is waiting.

"This the alpha that knocked you up?" Robert Graham is not one to mince words.

"Yep." Will learned by example.

Hannibal gives his mate a side eye, but moves forward, extending a hand.

"It is a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Graham. Dr. Hannibal Lecter."

"Uh-huh." The older Graham takes the proffered hand, looking the doctor up and down with a keen eye. "You taking care of my boy?"

Hannibal straightens up even more, if that is possible. "As much as he takes care of me."

"Good answer." The man smiles beneath his short, greying beard. "Call me Bobby."

"If you alphas are done with your posturing, the pregnant man would like to get out of this hell hole."

"Nice to hear that smart mouth hasn't changed. I hope that pup of yours inherits it."

After they get the older man set up in the guest bedroom back in Wolf Trap, Hannibal goes to start dinner. This leaves the father and son pair free to take the dogs out for a walk in the frigid December air.

"Bit different than Florida." Will says as they tromp through the snow.

“Reminds me of that winter we spent up at Lake Michigan.”

“The houseboat people?”

“Yep. Crazy fools. Move somewhere warm if you want to live on the water.”

“How many gators you have to run off last month?”

“Hush up, boy.”

Will huffs a laugh into his scarf. A rustling in the underbrush sends the majority of the pack careening off. Winston whines, looking up at Will with big, soulful brown eyes.

“Go on, I’m fine.” He tells him. The dog ‘boffs’ as if reassured and takes off after the rest.

“That’s a smart one. Where’d you find him?”

“Side of the road.”

“Dumped?”

“I can’t imagine he ran away, he’s far too loyal.”

His father slants a look at him. “How about that fancy alpha of yours? He loyal, too?”

Will rolls his eyes. “Smooth, Dad.”

“Damn right.”

“Yes, he’s loyal. He treats me right, and he is very excited about the baby.”

“Seems a bit stuffy.”

“He can be a little overbearing, but stops when I call him out on it. In my experience that’s just an alpha characteristic.” He grins at his father’s grouchy grunt. “He willingly went fishing with me.”

“Alright, alright. I trust you’re a good enough judge of character to know what you’re doing. And I will say, you look happier than I’ve seen you in a long time.”

“I am.”

“You can’t blame me for being concerned, though. To me, it seems like just yesterday you were a little curly-q pup yourself. You’ll find out what I mean soon enough.”

“Let’s get the kid born first.”

The older Graham shakes his head. “Can’t believe you’re making me a granddaddy. I’m too young for this.”

“Whatever you say, old man.”

“That’s enough sass outta you. Call your dogs and let’s see if your fancy man’s cooking is as good as I’ve heard.”

Chapter End Notes

Why yes, Will's dad is based off of Bobby Singer from Supernatural.

Lineage

Chapter Summary

Will discovers some facts about Hannibal, much to his consternation.

Chapter Notes

We have now reached the point where I have caught up with posting to what I have typed. While I am going to endeavor to continue posting once a day, I might not make it as I have a very busy month lined up. So sorry in advance, I know many of you have enjoyed the update speed.

At Will's recommendation, Hannibal keeps the meal fairly simply, forgoing some of his more impressive gourmet feats in favor of food that (as Will puts it) is actually recognizable to people without a culinary degree. Even so, Bobby is suitably impressed by the pan fried filet mignon.

Will is glad there is someone there who can appreciate the food. He has started what he is calling 'bottomless pit mode', and will honestly eat just about anything. He is especially been craving red meat, and could probably eat an entire cow if it stood still long enough.

His father takes a sip of Hannibal's home brew and nods in approval. "So what are the plans for after the pup's born?"

Will wipes his mouth with a cloth napkin that he knows he didn't buy. "Well, I told you over the phone I've been seriously considering switching careers? I haven't submitted anything yet, but I'm fairly sure I'm going to leave my teaching position. It seems a good time to move in a new direction, and will leave me time to take care of the baby."

"If the need arises, I can certainly cut back the number of patients I see a week." Hannibal says. "There is also the possibility of bringing in live in help, especially while the child is so young so Will and I don't wear ourselves out."

Will looks at him in surprise. "Like a nanny? You haven't mentioned that before."

"There is still sometime before we need to make that decision, but I assumed you knew it is a viable option."

Will narrows his eyes. "So you don't already have someone picked out?"

Hannibal hesitates, no doubt realizing he needs to tread lightly here. His eyes flick to Bobby, who is watching the two of the with an amused look as he nurses his beer.

“If we decide we would need the extra help, I believe my aunt’s former companion, Chiyoh, is more than capable of acting as a nursemaid.”

Will relaxes minutely. “Okay. A friend of your family. That’s not so bad. I’m not so sure about the live-in part. What’s she doing now? Does she even live in the states?”

“She is still employed by the estate as caretaker of the family seat.”

“Estate?” Bobby asks at the same time Will says, “Family seat?”

Hannibal’s expression shifts slightly as he glances from one to the other. If Will didn’t know better, he’d say he looks uncertain. “I told you that my country of origin is Lithuania?”

Will nods.

“Though it became mostly meaningless during the Soviet occupation, the Lecter title was reinstated when independence was declared in 1990. After my parents’ deaths, my uncle served as the trustee until I came of age. As he and my aunt had no children of their own, I also inherited their not insignificant assets.”

“Wait, title?” This is the most Will has ever heard Hannibal volunteer about his background, and the influx of information is giving him whiplash.

“As I said, it is basically meaningless, especially given the fact I have not returned to my birth country in almost three decades, but yes, technically, I am Count Hannibal Lecter VIII.”

Will stares at him, just barely managing to keep his mouth from hanging open.

His father’s reaction is much more blasé. “Huh. How about that.”

Later on, in bed, Will brings up the subject again. “Count Lecter. Why did you never mention it before?”

Hannibal makes a strained expression. “Please, Will. I much prefer the title doctor, as earned it through diligent study, and not as part of an outdated mode of social strictures.”

“I should have known.” Will grumbles, sliding down the sheets and bunching the blankets up around himself. “You would be some blue blooded noble. You have that regal air about you. As if you weren’t perfect enough.”

Hannibal smiles at him, the corners of his eyes crinkling. “Of course, as my mate you are bestowed the title of Countess.”

“What!” Will sits up sharply, blankets falling away.

“I believe there is a signet ring somewhere if you would like to wear it.”

“You better be joking.”

“Have you ever known me to jest?”

“You like wordplay an awful lot.”

“A side effect of speaking multiple languages.”

“How many do you speak again?

“Four fluently, English, French, Italian, and Lithuanian, and I can read in German, Russian, Polish, and Japanese. I can passibly converse in Spanish and Portuguese.

Will squints hard at his placid face. “How are you even real?”

“William.” he says chidingly.

“No, I am seriously asking. Rich, titled, European doctor. An artist, a musician (with some extremely unconventional instruments, I might add), a gourmet chef. You have superhuman smell and eidetic memory. And you’re also a polyglot. What the hell, Hannibal.”

“I am unsure what you are upset about.”

“Do you have some embarrassing fetish I should know about?”

“I am not ashamed of any of my sexual proclivities, but I don’t believe any of them are extreme enough to be considered fetishes in any case.”

“You’ve got to have some big flaw to balance your personality out. No one is this perfect.”

Hannibal looks amused. “I have been told I can be controlling, manipulative, and overbearing. By you, if memory serves.”

Will waves a hand irritably. “That’s standard alpha behavior. You don’t have a sex dungeon hidden away somewhere?”

“Not at the moment, though if you are interested in exploring a bdsm relationship, I would be willing to experiment.”

“That’s-we’ll get back to that later.” That could be very interesting, but Will wasn’t going to get side tracked right now.

“What is this about, Will? I have my faults, just as anyone else, as you know. I have to say, I believe this is the first time anyone accused me of being too perfect.”

“Why are you with me?” Will hates how plaintive his voice sounds, and scowls down at the blankets as if they are responsible for his insecurity.

The alpha’s face softens, and he pulls the omega into a tight embrace. Will hides his burning face against his chest so he doesn’t have to look at him.

“You misjudge your own worth, my dear. I believe your father is right. You see everyone clearly except yourself.”

Will makes a protesting noise, and Hannibal puts gentle pressure on his head until he is forced to look up at him.

“Will, our very natures determined that we are near perfect matches for each other. But it is your intelligence, drive, and compassion that drew me to you beyond our biological imperatives.”

“I asked you once how you saw me. You said you needed an extension. Do you have an answer now?”

Hannibal’s answer is surprisingly quick. “I see you as the mongoose I want under the house when the snakes slither by.”

The answer is so very Hannibal that he has to start laughing, the alpha joins in, a deep chested chuckle.

“Clearly I need to remind you of your virtues more often. I can start a list if you like.”

Will stretches, body sliding against Hannibal’s. He feels a flutter in his belly, as if their daughter is stretching, too.

“That is not necessary.”

“Do you believe me, then?”

Will doesn’t answer, just snuggles back down in the blankets, but somewhere deep in one of the darker corners of his soul, a flame is lit, sending some of the shadows away.

Happy Holidays

Chapter Summary

Christmas and New Years with our boys.

Chapter Notes

If you thought the last couple of chapters were sappy, you ain't read nothing yet.

The three of them spend a quiet Christmas together. Hannibal has an elegant blue spruce delivered to the house, and they decorate it with multi color lights and popcorn strands (which the dogs take a great interest in). They spend the day of eating too much and exchanging small presents (and yes, Will had to reign Hannibal in when shopping for his father, luckily the man seemed genuinely pleased with the new fly reel). Hannibal is delighted with his fountain pen, showing off his calligraphy skills by writing a thank you note then and there. Will is glad that the collection of Norman Maclean books Hannibal had gotten for him was a suitable trade.

From his father, he got a replacement tacklebox (he'd mentioned his old one was getting worn out), and a flat rectangular package inexpertly wrapped in newspaper. He looks at his father in surprise. Usually they just exchanged the one gift. The man just gestures for him to open it. He does. Inside is a spiral bound, cream colored book. On the cover in gold embossed letters it says 'Memory Book'. He opens it. On the first page, is a picture of their first ultrasound.

"When did you get this?" Will asks him.

"Had your fancy man pick it up when he went shopping."

"Thank you." He hugs his dad tightly. He is definitely not crying. He's probably just allergic to the tree.

"Wasn't anything." The older Graham grumbles, but his voice sounds thick. The allergies must be genetic.

For New Year's Eve, Hannibal and Will were invited to a party hosted by the Crawfords. Will would have preferred to spend the evening watching his father shoot off fireworks from the comfort of his porch, a tradition they kept up when he visited in Sugarloaf, but this is the first

time Bella has felt up to entertaining since her diagnosis and she had asked him specifically to come. Plus he knew Hannibal enjoyed the socializing.

So Bobby cheerfully waves them off from the couch surrounded by dogs and breaking into one of Hannibal's high end bottles of scotch. Will tries not to be too jealous as they walk up the sidewalk to the Crawford's quaint brownstone townhouse. Bella greets them warmly, looking radiant. The only sign of her illness a slight drawn look about the eyes.

One benefit Will had not previously considered about pregnancy was that it was a perfect excuse to plop down in a comfortable chair in the corner and send his mate to fetch him food from the buffet table. With his coat off, his tight dress shirt (no flashy suits for this party) highlights his baby bump. Unfortunately for Will, this combined with his pregnancy scent means he is quickly surrounded by a flock of other omegas and beta women.

The other guests include friends from the Crawford's respective workplaces, as well as a smattering of relatives. So while there are a few faces he recognizes from the halls of the FBI, most are strangers. That doesn't stop them from wanting to share their own childbearing experiences.

Most of which are terrifying, and coming from Will, that is saying something.

"They had to dislocate the baby's tailbone?" Will repeats, voice blank with suppressed horror.

An older omega man, who Will thinks might be Jack's uncle nods sagely. "Oh yes, and this is after they'd tried suction. Had to break out the forceps to finally get him out. It was a breech birth, and this was before the days of epidurals and c-sections. The midwife certainly earned her pay. Worked on me for hours, I passed out just as they cut the cord."

Will's overactive imagination had never been so much of a curse as that moment. So when a familiar voice calls out his name, he turns in eager relief. Beverly picks her way over to him, holding a little plate of finger foods.

"I heard you were up the duff."

"Word gets around."

"You'd think FBI agents wouldn't be such gossips."

He snags a grape off her plate. "People who go into law enforcement are incurably nosy."

"Not nearly as much as those who go into psychology, I assure you." Hannibal appears at his side. "So you don't have to steal from Agent Katz." He presents Will with his own plate.

"Wish I had service like that." Beverly winks at Hannibal who pulls up a chair on the other side of Will and sits down, wrapping an arm around his shoulders."

"I hope the evening is finding you well?"

"Can't complain, though that doesn't always stop me." She says cheerfully.

A red faced Jimmy Price stumbles up next to her. “Bev, have you tried this eggnog? It could knock a horse over. Oh, Dr. Lecter, Will. Fancy seeing you here.”

“Where’s your partner in crime-solving?” Beverly asks.

“With his mate’s family in New Hampshire.”

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen you two apart.” Will says, popping a pretzel into his mouth.

“No one else is willing to partner with us anymore.” This is said with an unreasonable amount of pride.

“Beverly works with you,” Will points out.

“I think that says more about me than them,” she says with a wry grin.

The tapping of metal on glass draws the everyone’s attention to the front of the room. Jack and Bella are standing side by side in front of a large Christmas tree framed by a bay window.

“We want to thank all of you for coming. It means a lot to us that you could share this holiday with us. Before midnight strikes, we have an announcement. Dear?” He wraps an arm around his mate’s waist and she leans into him.

“As of my last doctor’s appointment on the twenty-third, there is no sign of cancer, and while I’m going to be monitored closely over the next few months, I am officially in remission.” There is a moment of silence, and then a loud cheer goes up. Will claps along. If tears gather at the corners of his eyes, he blames the pregnancy hormones.

Bella is swamped by people wanting to hug and talk to her. Will stays where he is, knowing he can always talk to her later. Jack, however, searches out their little group.

“Congratulations, Jack.” Hannibal says to the other alpha as he approaches.

“Thank you, Hannibal. And thank you both for all you have done for us over the last year.”

“Bella’s a wonderful woman, you are lucky to have her.” Will says.

“That I am.” His eyes seeks out his wife across the room. As if she can feel his gaze she turns, and their eyes meet. A soft smile is shared between them, so full of love that the whole room can feel it.

Will looks up at his own mate, a hand resting on his abdomen and they share a smile of their own.

Dog Days

Chapter Summary

Will visits Georgia.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Bobby Graham leaves on the third, promising to come back up after the baby is born and they've gotten her settled in at home. Will, for the first time since he started working when he was 16, finds himself with all the free time he could want in the upcoming months. It's an odd feeling that does not quite sit right with him. He needs to have something he is working toward. So after a few days of sleeping late and puttering around, he sits down and makes a renovation plan.

They are turning the upstairs guest room into the nursery, but Will realizes that there is a lot more that needs to be done to the house to make it baby friendly. He goes out to the barn, taking in the broken farm equipment and old furniture he had pretty much just left alone after he moved in. In his mind's eye, he can see the widespace transformed into a workshop; motor parts on one side, fly-tying and fishing supplies on the other. The image solidifies in front of him, and he can see himself, kneeling next to a little girl with wild curls, teaching her to tie knots.

At Hannibal's insistence, he hires a local company to do the heavy lifting and construction. While having strangers close to his den makes him twitchy, he does admit it makes the whole process a lot easier. He contents himself with ordering things for the baby's room and keeping the dogs out from under foot.

It's just as well he doesn't have that much to do. Pregnancy wears him out. Even a gentle walk around the property leaves him tired. As his belly grows, his feet and ankles start to swell, and his back is constantly protesting. He feels like he's always either eating or going to the bathroom. Still, after a few weeks, he's mentally restless so when he gets a call from Alana, telling him Georgia Madchen woke up from her coma, he puts aside the discomfort he feels leaving his home and goes to the hospital.

He sits on a chair helpfully provided by an orderly and speaks to her through an intercom in the oxygen chamber. She looks much better, like the young woman she actually is.

"You look better." He says to her.
"Do I look alive?" Her voice contains a note of pleading.
He smiles softly at her. "You look pretty."
She looks away, self conscious. "Must be all the oxygen." She pauses, They're going to give

me shock treatment. Electroconvulsive therapy is what they called it but shock treatment sounds nicer."

"People who have what you have can recover with shock treatment."

Her mouth twists with cynicism. "Know how many times I've been told I would recover with some kind of treatment? They don't know what I have. They're still guessing."

"Maybe they know this time."

"They said I might remember what I did. I don't want to remember."

He looks sadly at the girl through the glass. "You know what you did, Georgia."

He hands clench. She trembles. "But I don't remember it. I don't remember it like I did it. It feels more like some horrible dream where I killed my friend."

"Do you remember anything else? How you got to my house?"

"Just-flashes. A car. Snow. Was there a dog?"

"I have seven dogs. Winston took a shine to you. Wanted to ride in the ambulance with you." That coaxed the first true smile he had seen out of her, though it is tinged with sorrow.

"Beth had a dog, when we were growing up. Lacey. I liked playing with her. I could always recognize her. She was always happy to see me."

"Would you like me to ask if I could bring Winston in to visit?" He offers before he can think better of it.

She looks up at him. "I-I think I'd like that."

Turns out getting a therapy dog registered is not nearly as difficult as he anticipated. After browsing the available certification programs, he goes with Therapy Dogs International. He contacts the testing area in Winchester, VA and sets up an appointment. In the meantime, he walks Winston through a mock test, with Hannibal's help. The brown dog does his paces easily. It is enough to make Will wonder if he wasn't a support dog in his previous life.

Needless to say, he passes his certification with flying colors, and receives an id card and bandanna. Will had attempted to walk the other dogs through the test, but Jackson was the only one who even came close and even he couldn't restrain himself at the refuse treat stage. He'd have to work with them a bit more, but he feels optimistic about the venture.

He contacts the hospital and sets up a time to visit Georgia with Winston. Of course she won't be able to touch him, but his presence may cheer her up. As he arrives, he bumps into a familiar face leaving the ward. To his great surprise, it is Frederick Chilton. They stop short, looking at each other.

"Graham." The psychiatrist's eyes flick down to Will's baby bump. His lip curls imperceptibly.

“Chilton.” Well if he wasn’t going to be polite, Will sure as hell wasn’t going to. “What are you doing here?”

“I am still a psychiatrist. I was visiting one of my former patients.” He says haughtily. “What are you doing here? With-” He looks down at Winston who studiously ignores him, “ *That* .”

“As you can see from the bandanna, we are providing therapy. I’m not surprised you don’t recognize it.” Okay, that one was a cheap shot.

Chilton narrows his eyes. “Is that a wise decision considering your,” he sniffs, “condition?”

“I don’t think it’s any of your business what I choose to do with my time.” And Will is done talking to him. He pushes past him through the double doors into the ward.

Georgia is asleep when he gets to the room containing the oxygen chamber. He settles down in a chair, Winston, ears pricked forward next to him. Something fallen at the edge of the tank catches his eye. It’s Georgia’s grounding band. He presses the intercom.

“Georgia?”

She startles awake, hands coming up before she realizes where she is. Turning, her eyes go to Winston.

“Mr. Graham?”

“Your bracelet fell off.”

She puts it back on, then shifts uncomfortably. A plastic comb is produced from underneath her.

“Where’d this come from?” She asks.

“Maybe it fell out of a nurse’s pocket?” He suggests frowning. Something was tickling the back of his mind. “Pass it through the slot, that kind of material is bad for static build up.”

She puts it in the compartment, sealing it airtight from the inside without comment. Will takes it out from the other side. Winston comes up and sniffs at it. She smiles at the dog, pressing herself against the side of the tank. Will shows her some tricks and they talk about his other dogs.

“I wish I could pet him.” She sighs.

“Once you’re recovered.” He assures her.

His pleasure at being able to cheer Georgia up is tempered by his concern over the comb. He stops at the nurses’ desk to ask if anyone had lost it. She says no one has mentioned it. He glances at the visitor’s log as he signs out. Chilton’s name isn’t on it.

“Do you mind me asking who Dr. Chilton was visiting?”

The nurse is scratching Winston behind the ears. “Who?”

“The man who left as I was coming in.”

“No one else has been into visit today.” She says. He frowns again, but thanks her.

It still isn’t sitting right with him that evening at home. Hannibal encourages him to call Jack about his concerns.

“I don’t have proof of anything. Just a feeling.”

“Jack respects your intuition, Will. If Chilton is covertly visiting Georgia, he will want to know.”

Will nods, and makes the call. Jack thanks him and says he’ll put a watch on her room, ‘just in case’.

Chapter End Notes

Therapy Dogs International is a real organization with branches all over the USA and several other countries. Check out the website if you are considering getting your dog registered or just want to learn more about it. http://www.tdi-dog.org/About.aspx

For Art's Sake

Chapter Summary

Will deals with pregnancy and does a little consulting.

Chapter Notes

And now we're getting into season 2 territory. Incidentally, does anyone have thoughts on what breeds Will's dogs are? I'm working off the pictures from the show, but I'm not all that familiar with dog breeds.

Will visits Georgia with Winston a few more times before she is moved back to Delaware to stay in a facility closer to her family. The guards reported no incidents.

It is just as well, as he enters his third trimester, he only leaves the house for doctor's visits, and even those he has to talk himself into. His instincts start clamouring at him to stay close to home and secure the nest. He spends hours in the nursery, imprinting his scent on the soft toys and bedding. The fancy bassinet Hannibal ordered from some specialty store would live in their bedroom until their daughter is big enough to sleep in the crib. Will is far more lax about Hannibal spending exorbitant amounts if the purchases are for the baby. Though he does fear he might have to curb a tendency to spoil her in the future.

As his stomach grows, his physical stamina weakens. It's unbelievably frustrating being unable to do simple tasks. The pipe under the kitchen sink developed a leak, so he gets down under the cabinet to fix it, and is unable to get back up on his own. Luckily Hannibal is there to hoist him up, wisely keeping his mouth shut about his suggestion to call a plumber that Will had scorned.

He ends up spending a lot of time reading, working his way through a list of books that he hadn't previously had time to read. Even with that, though, he finds himself growing restless. As difficult as profiling is emotionally, it always provided him with plenty of mental stimulation. Which is why when Beverly shows up at his door with a classified file, he lets her in without a word.

He makes coffee and serves her somewhat enviously as he pours himself a cup of herbal tea. They get settled, him in his recliner with pillows propped up behind him, and her in Hannibal's desk chair.

"Jack ask you to do this?" he asks.

“No, I came on my own. He’s trying to give you some space.”

“Really.” That doesn’t sound like Jack.

“I think the decision was strongly suggested by Mrs. Crawford.”

“Ah.” That makes more sense.

“But no one ever said I couldn’t bother you.” She says this with a smirk, before it melts off her face into a more sober expression. “We need your help on this one. A lot of people are missing.”

The baby gives him a sharp kick. He absentmindedly rubs the spot. “Pictures?”

“Yes.” She hands him the file, images of young faces smiling out at him.

“The first six bodies ended up in the same place. Dumped in a river, caught in a beaver dam.”

“What does he do to them?”

“He targets them, follows them home, abducts them, and preserves them.”

“You want to know how he’s choosing them?” It must be why she’s here, there’s no obvious connections between the victims, though they are all mostly within an 18-35 age range.

“Thought you would have some ideas.” She swivels back and forth on the chair. Harley, the big softie, comes up and puts his head on her thigh. She rubs his head, eyes still on him. “The photo packet at the end of the file is a group that are all missing, under similar circumstances, from different states.”

He looks through the pictures, the pendulum in his mind creaking into motion after weeks of disuse. After a few minutes , he hauls himself up and goes over to his work table, moving fly tying things out of the way so he can spread the photos out, arranging them. Beverly comes up behind him, looking over his shoulder.

“It’s a color palette.”

Will doesn’t dwell much on the case in the week that follows, he had given Beverley what she needed. He watches lamaze videos on the internet and dubiously tries some out. As much as he misses his mate while he is working, he is glad he isn’t here to see him attempt the awkward pelvic rocking. The baby starts kicking up a storm as if angered by the sudden turbulence. He stands, hands resting below his stomach..

“Calm down, little bit. I’m sorry.” He says to the mound of his belly, a conciliatory purr slipping into his speech. Ellie, his havanese/poodle mix comes up to him and starts whining for cuddles. Using a chair for leverage, he gingerly lowers himself to the floor, and is soon draped in affectionate canines. It’s going to be a big change for them when the baby arrives, so he makes sure they all get plenty of attention. He’s not too worried about them getting along with the baby, but there is always the possibility of them acting out.

His phone rings, and he sighs, getting up with some difficulty. It's gone to voicemail by the time he finds it. It's Hannibal telling him that something came up that afternoon, but he would be home that evening. Will sends him a quick text confirming he'd gotten the message. He goes to make himself a snack since it appears dinner will be late.

Beverly shows up again the next day at lunch. Hannibal had left a collection of thinly sliced cold cuts, cheeses, and vegetables so he could easily make sandwiches when he grew peckish. He offers her some because he certainly isn't going to stop eating, even while looking at Roland Umber's waterlogged corpse.

They discuss the case over ham and swiss on sourdough. He gives her his impressions, gesturing to the picture of the man on the slab with a pickle.

"Had a high tolerance for opiates, the overdose didn't kill him. He survived what was done to him. He tore himself free. He ran." He punctuated the sentence with a crunch.

Beverley cuts a slice of tomato for her own sandwich. "How did he end up in the water?"

"Killer didn't put him there. He'd have put him back in the mural if he caught him. Other bodies were dumped. Roland Umber got away." Will chews while he thinks. "This killer needs someplace private to do what he does. A warehouse, a farm, someplace abandoned, upstream from where the body was found. It'll be close to the water."

"Thank you." She makes a note and puts the file away.

"No problem."

"You know," She says offhandedly preparing to dig into her meal. "Hannibal thought he tore him down and dumped him like the others."

Will pauses mid bite. "Hannibal is consulting on this case?"

She frowns. "He was with us when we collected the initial bodies. He came to the lab yesterday during Umber's autopsy. You didn't know?"

"No. I thought he was still working through Chilton's notes." Will suddenly isn't hungry. "Has he consulted on any other cases?"

"None that I know of." She looks at him worriedly. "I think this is something you'll have to discuss with him."

"Oh, don't worry, I intend to."

Sharing is Caring

Chapter Summary

Will confronts Hannibal about his secret keeping.

Chapter Notes

I gotta a bunch of comments on the previous chapter, and all of them were some variation on 'oooooooohhhhh, Hanni's in troooooooouuuuublllllllleeee.' lmao XD

Will tries not to feel too much like an angry housewife waiting up for a cheating spouse to come home. The baby, as if sensing his agitation moves restlessly inside of him. He taps his fingers on the arm of his chair, mulling over how to best broach the topic. He isn't even sure why he is so upset. He doesn't have any real problem with Hannibal consulting with the FBI. Though, it does rankle a bit that the alpha was stepping into the space he had recently vacated.

The dogs' ears pricked up, the more excitable ones rushing to the door as they heard the tell-tale purr of the Bentley pulling in. Will listens to the door shut and counts the seconds until the front door opens. Hannibal's eyes find him immediately when he comes in, his demeanor shifting from relaxed to alert as he takes in Will's tense posture and grim expression.

"Will? What's wrong?" The alpha quickly moves over to him, reaching out to touch his stomach. "Is it the baby?"

"No." Will bats his hands away. He isn't in the mood for coddling. He sniffs, clinging to Hannibal's clothes is the scent of disinfectant and formaldehyde in addition to his sweat and cologne. He'd been in the lab. There's also the faint smell of...corn? Annoyance flares up.

"So did they find where he is storing the bodies?" He asks, just this side of too casual.

Hannibal goes very still. Will is watching him closely so he can see the gears turning fast in his mate's head behind his blank mask.

"A grain silo upstream of where Umber was found. There was corn in the craquelure coating him. They were able to match it to the field." His voice is just as casual as Will's.

"And you went with them to the scene?"

“Yes.” Hannibal kneels in front of him. A part of Will thrills at the sight of the alpha in a submissive position to him, but his anger is not that easily sated.

“Will-” Hannibal begins, but he cuts him off.

“What was his design?”

Hannibal gives him one of his unreadable looks, then reaches into his briefcase for his tablet. They are both silent as he pulls up a picture of a monstrous eye made up of the shades of humanity. Will studies it for a long time, the pendulum swinging almost lazily in his mind.

“How did you get this?”

“Jack forwarded it to me.”

Will enlarges the picture, magnifying the pupil. “One of these things is not like the other things. One of these things just doesn't belong.”

Hannibal puts his hand on his knee, Will doesn’t push it off, but doesn’t acknowledge it either, keeping his eyes on the picture.

“Who are you? Why are you so different from everyone else? I didn't put you here.”

He finally looks at Hannibal when the alpha reaches out to touch his face. “The killer is in the mural.” He taps the pale shape in the center. “This man. Whoever sewed him in... took a piece of him. As a trophy. Question is, who sewed him in.”

“He must have had a friend.” Hannibal says. Will’s mouth twists. He flips the cover of the tablet over with a snap, and pushes it at Hannibal, pushing him away in the process. With effort, he heaves himself up and waddles to the kitchen. He’s a bit put out that he can’t stomp, it would have a better effect.

Hannibal trails behind him. “Will-” He starts again.

“Be very careful what you say next. It might save you getting a kettle thrown at your head.” Will says, putting said kettle on the stove and flicking the heat on.

“I apologize for not telling you I was consulting on the case.”

Will withdraws a box of tea from the cabinet, setting it down heavily on the counter. He doesn’t say anything.

“I didn’t want to trouble you unduly.”

“And when I told you Beverly asked for my help? I’d already been troubled. What’s your excuse for that?”

Hannibal bows his head, contrite. “In truth I was rather upset she had asked you. I refrained from saying anything because I didn’t want you drawn in even more than you already were.”

“That wasn’t your decision to make.” He fills the tea ball with the loose leaf and puts it in a fancy patterned teapot. He is pretty sure there are matching cups and saucers somewhere. He looks through the cupboards.

Hannibal comes up behind him, reaching the top shelf and pulling two sets down. He places them on the counter. Will turns, finding himself trapped by his mate, body pressing gently against the omega’s swollen stomach. Will’s eyes flick to his then drop to his chin.

“I am sorry.”

Will’s hands clench involuntarily into fists. “Really, Hannibal? Are you really sorry? Because it seems to me that if you had concerns, you should have talked to me about it instead of intentionally keeping secrets. And if you were so worried about troubling me, why did you agree to consult in the first place? I gave up field work because I didn’t want it following me home. Something that you were in favor of. So why is it okay for you to go do it?”

The kettle is boiling, and he breaks away from the alpha to pour the hot water into the teapot. As it steeps, he glances back at Hannibal, who has picked up one of the teacups and is turning it in his hands. He is quiet, while Will pours the tea and settles himself at the table. Hannibal sits across from him. The silence between them grows long. Will watches the steam rise off the liquid. Max comes and puts his head on his knee.

Finally Hannibal speaks. “I am truly sorry, Will. I should have spoken to you. We are partners and such decisions should be made together. I confess that when Jack extended the invitation, it was selfish interest that made me accept. I was curious about the case, but you are correct it is not fair for me to expect you to abandon such work and continue to partake in it myself. It seems I ended up causing you more strife than what I was trying to prevent.”

Will snorts into his tea at that. “That’s what comes from keeping secrets.” He grows more somber and fixes the alpha with a piercing stare. “I need to be able to trust you, Hannibal.” He places a hand on his stomach. The baby kicks him in response. “We need to be able to trust you. I’m not asking you to tell me every little detail about your life, but no more keeping things from me ‘for my own good,’ alright?”

“Yes, Will.” He reaches out and takes his hand, and Will grasps his back. “No more secrets.”

You're Having My Baby

Chapter Summary

Pregnancy sex. Also an update on the Ripper case.

Chapter Notes

I'm trying my hardest to finish this story by the end of the month. I'm doing a collection of short stories based off of prompts I've been collecting for NaNoWriMo. Most of them are Hannigram, and I will be uploading them.

Will has seen whales before, on the Atlantic Ocean while deep sea fishing with his father on a small time commercial boat. At the time, he had been awed watching the massive dark shapes glide beneath the waves. The majesty of whales is kind of lost when you find yourself in a comparative position to a beached one.

He lies on his side in bed, idly dreading when he will inevitably have to get up to go pee. He is due any day now. The doctor has him scheduled for induction if he doesn't go into labor by next Sunday. Personally, he is more than ready for this baby to be born.

Hannibal has gone on official paternity leave, finding referrals for those patients that needed consistent therapy. The alpha is currently downstairs, letting the dogs out. That little omega in the back of Will's head wanted to have his mate and pack with him constantly, protecting the nest and comforting him. But the logical part of his brain didn't want to have to clean up the puddles that would result from such a situation.

The early spring light streams through the flimsy lace curtains from the previous owners that he'd never bothered changing. It warmed the expanse of his bare upper body. He abandoned his shirt, as the material irritated his swollen and tender breasts. Inside him, the baby stretches, pressing at the ever shrinking confines of her home.

Will watches in a sort of horrified fascination at the way the skin of his abdomen bulges as she moves. Is that the outline of a foot? Supposedly this is the most natural thing in the world, but right now he feels like there is a little alien inside of him. Would Hannibal get the joke if he suggested they name the child Ripley?

Ah yes, the name. He closes his eyes. The dogs are still barking joyfully outside. The wind whistles around the house, likely giving the morning air a bite that he is safe from inside. There had been issues with finding a name both he and Hannibal could agree on. Because

Will would be damned if his daughter had to go to school with a name like Andromeda. He had a normal name, and he'd still heard enough Billy Graham jokes to last a lifetime. But apparently Hannah is too plebeian for Count Hannibal Lecter VIII. So the poor little pup is still nameless.

The thought makes him reach over and pick up Hannibal's tablet. He scrolls through some baby naming sites, but nothing jumps out at him. His ruminations are interrupted by the ringing of his phone on the bedside table. The caller id informs it's Jack. Who should know better than to call him about a case this close to his due date. He hopes Bella is okay. Frowning, he answers.

"Jack?"

"Will. Sorry to disturb you, but we just had a huge break in the Chesapeake Ripper case, and I wanted to update you personally."

Will struggles to sit up, bracing himself on the bed frame. "What happened?"

"You heard about the Tree Man?" Jack doesn't wait for an answer. "Price was able to trace the water source used to a fifty mile radius. A sweep of the area turned up his...workshop."

"Jesus." Will breaths.

"We found Miriam Lass."

"Oh, Jack." Will's empathy tells him only too well how that is affecting the man.

"She's alive. Missing an arm, but alive. She...she thanked me for not giving up on her." His voice almost breaks on that last sentence.

"Jack…." Will doesn't know what to say to that. Everyone had given up on her.

He seemed to recover himself. "She says she never saw his face, but we are hoping she'll be able to recognize his voice."

"Do you have any suspects for her to listen to?" Will asks incredulous.

"Oh, I can think of at least one." He says. "But don't worry about that, Will. We've got it in hand. You worry about that baby."

"I don't have much of a choice about that." Will says with a touch of amusement. "Seeing as it's taken over my body."

He hangs up as Hannibal comes back in the room, cheeks and nose red from the chill. The dogs stream in behind him in a flurry of wagging tails and snuffling noses. Buster tries to hop up on the bed, but Will sends him back off with an admonishing 'tsst'. He looks at Hannibal who is watching him with a curious little smile, eyes filled with possessive satisfaction.

Will rolls his eyes at him. "Admiring the evidence of your virility?"

“Appreciating the beauty of my mate.” The alpha corrects smoothly, sitting on the bed facing Will. “You put me in the mind of a modern Botticelli.”

“I’m not much of a Venus.”

“I disagree, though I was thinking more along the lines of his Madonna, or perhaps the Primavera. I was quite taken with that painting in my youth. I filled sketchbook after sketchbook with the image, returning to the Uffizi like a pilgrim.”

Hannibal reaches out and runs a hand over the bare skin of Will’s belly. “Even now my fingers itch to draw you, but I fear I will never encapsulate your magnificence.”

“Magnificence,” Will repeats, “from the Latin root magnus meaning great. So if you’re referring to my size, you’re right on the money. I’m going to have my own gravitational field soon.

“Then I shall be a planet, happily caught in revolution around my star.” Hannibal pronounces grandly.

He stretches out beside Will, hand slipping lower beneath the band of the loose boxers Will is wearing.

“What are you doing?” Will asks, voice going breathy, eyelashes fluttering.

“Showing my adoration.” The alpha whispers against the warm curve of his neck.

“Is this really the time?” It’s a token protest, Will is already parting his legs, as clever fingers stroke the soft skin of his inner thigh.

“I cannot imagine a better time.” Hannibal moves gracefully down the bed, pulling Will boxers off. He ends up lying fully clothed with his head in Will’s lap, as if he truly is a supplicant.

The omega responds with a quiet moan, as a finger moves ever so gently along the skin of his perineum which has grown thin and delicate this close to the birth. Warm breath passes over the head of his cock, which is growing plump with interest at the proceedings. Hannibal presses his nose to the crease of Will’s groin and inhales deeply. He rumbles in appreciation.

“There are no words to describe your scent.”

“Sweaty and frustrated, I would think.” Will says panting.

“Mmmm,” is the only answer he gets as Hannibal moves lower, running his tongue along the seam of Will’s body. He gasps, the sensation just one step removed from pain.

“Is this alright?” Hannibal asks, easing off.

“Yes, keep going.”

He does, pressing open mouthed kisses against him, before moving back up to his cock that now stood at attention against his round belly. Hannibal presses his lips tenderly to the head, tongue flicking out to taste. The alpha sits back and undoes his pants, pulling his cock out so they can press their sexes together.

Will's head lolls back. Hannibal's long artist's fingers wrap around the two of them, squeezing. He works them up and down, the slide getting slicker on each stroke. Will can feel his mate pulse against him. He shudders with desire. It's a leisurely build up, neither of them feeling rushed, content to let the pleasure creep up on them.

When they do finally climax, Hannibal raises up to kiss his mouth. His stomach pressing against the swell where their daughter rests. She gives her sire a vicious kick through Will's womb. As he startles back, looking down , Will starts laughing. After a moment, Hannibal joins in with his deep chuckle.

"Shall I bring you breakfast in bed?" Hannibal asks after cleaning them up. "Or brunch," he amends, looking at the clock.

"No, I should get up." Will sighs, holding his arms out to be helped up.

Once settled downstairs, with a plate of cajun spiced protein scramble, he tells Hannibal about Jack's call.

"Do you think he was saving Miriam Lass to be his last victim?" Hannibal asks.

"I think that the Ripper doesn't make mistakes. This feels like...theatre. He's leading us to the denouement of his choosing."

"To what end?"

"I don't know." Will takes a sip of his tea. It's been so long since he's had coffee. He refuses to drink decaf and he won't be able to have the real stuff until the baby's been weaned. "The Ripper has always been different. He's not...pathological. He doesn't have the drive to kill in a certain way over and over like most serial killers. That's why he is so hard to pin down. He's unpredictable. His kills are art, not ritual."

"But you don't believe this was simply a slip up? He is still human after all."

"First instinct? No. This was a deliberate calculation in the game he's playing with Jack. But, without seeing the workshop or talking with Lass, I can't say definitively."

"You don't seem overly concerned." Hannibal says, raising an eyebrow.

"My mind is preoccupied with other things at the moment." Will says, running a hand over his stomach meaningfully.

"No regrets in not being able to chase down the bad guys yourself?" Hannibal asks, tone light, but his eyes watching carefully.

Will gives the question due consideration. “I won’t lie and say there wasn’t a certain amount of satisfaction that I got from helping put murderers away, but I wouldn’t trade this,” he indicates the two of them, the house, dogs, and his belly, “for anything.”

Hannibal smiles, a real one that reaches his eyes. “I agree completely.”

Won't Back Down

Chapter Summary

Don't mess with Will Fucking Graham.

Saturday, Will prepares to go to the hospital the next morning. He has had a go bag prepared for the last several weeks, but he is supplementing it with some last minute additions. He loads some podcasts onto his phone and packs a book. He has been warned that labor is not like how it is portrayed in film. There is a lot of waiting around for dilation. Not to mention the actual birth can take a while, too. Yeah, he's not looking forward to that.

He is also not looking forward to leaving his house. His instincts are telling him to go back to his nest where he and his offspring will be safe. He had considered a home birth for about half a second when he prepared his birth plan. Ultimately the lure of drugs and a sterile environment with plenty of trained medical professionals won out. But his pregnancy brain is now giving him trouble over the decision.

Winston presses against his side in response to Will's distress. Absentmindedly, he scratches behind the dog's ears. He wraps a blanket around his shoulders and goes out to the front porch. The old ladder back chair he keeps out there creaks ominously under his weight. Hannibal is in the kitchen, of course, preparing food to take with him since god forbid they have to consume hospital food.

Winston's ears perk up, and his head turns toward the direction of the road. It is only a moment before the noise of a car reaches Will's ears. A car going dangerously fast. Some part of Will's hind brain takes note, and his hair stands on end. He goes in the house.

"Hannibal. Someone's coming."

The alpha pauses in cutting up what looks like a kidney. He cocks his head. With his usual calm demeanor, he straightens. "I'll draw the curtains. Get your phone and be ready to call the police if need be."

Will wishes he had a moment to drink in Hannibal's stance. He is in full protective alpha glory, ready to defend his mate and den.

His phone is upstairs charging in the bedroom. He goes as fast as he can waddle. A door slams outside, and heavy rapid footsteps sound up to the front of the house. He grabs his phone, and after a split second hesitation, grabs his hand gun from the floor safe also.

There is a pounding on the door. "Graham! Lecter! I know you're in there! I need your help!"

Wait-Is that Chilton? Will thinks incredulously. He creeps (okay, cautiously tottles) down the stairs.

Hannibal has opened the door a crack. Will cannot see the former hospital director, but he can smell blood.

“Frederick, I cannot possibly imagine what has brought you to our door in such a state, but I am going to have to ask you to leave.”

“Please! I’m being set up! Abel Gideon was half-eaten in my guest room. I have corpses on my property. I think they’re FBI.”

Will is texting Jack as fast as he can, not wanting to draw Chilton’s attention with a phone call.

“Why come to us?” Hannibal asks, portraying only polite curiosity, but Will can hear the restrained ice in the tone.

“If anyone can clear my name and find the real Ripper, it’s Graham. Can I use your shower? I just need-I have to leave the country. I'm leaving the country. I just need some time.”

“If your run, you look guilty.” Will says from the stairs. Hannibal turns to frown at him, giving Chilton the opportunity he needs to push into the house. The alpha moves to shield his mate with his body.

“I can’t stay! Jack Crawford thinks I killed two agents -- three agents. You know what tends to happen to people who do that? Shoot on sight.” Will can see the man now, wild eyed and disheveled, blood staining his clothing.

“There's surely an APB on you now. They've canceled your credit cards, they're tracing your phone.” Will says.

“I have cash and I tossed my phone.”

“Will.” Hannibal says, without taking his eyes off Chiton. “Go upstairs.” The dogs begin to bark. Will doesn’t move, but his hand tightens on the gun.

“How did you find my house, Chilton?” Will asks. There is a smoldering anger beginning to flare up inside of him.

“What?” The man asks, thrown.

“I don’t make a habit of giving out my address to many people. And this is a difficult place to find if you are unfamiliar with the back roads here.

“I-I,” the man splutters, “I have GPS.”

“But how did you know what to put in?” Will presses, coming further down the stairs, Hannibal is tense in front of him, but does not interrupt. “I certainly didn’t tell you. My FBI and medical files are confidential. So where did you get my address?”

“I must have come across it somewhere. Personal information is so hard to keep private these days.” Chilton looks shifty. The dogs have formed a loose circle around Will and Hannibal. They aren’t baring their teeth yet, but they are on alert, seven pairs of eyes fixed on the intruder.

“And did Abel Gideon just *come across it somewhere* ? Did Georgia Madchen?” Will moves in front of Hannibal, advancing on the man. He can feel the fury growing inside of him. How dare this man. How dare he invade Will’s den. This is his sanctuary. This is where he cares for his tribe. Will bares his teeth, and that seems to be the signal for a low snarl to rise from the pack.

Chilton appears to realize he has stumbled into the lion pit. He takes a step back. There is the crunch of gravel outside. He spins. “What did you do?”

“You threatened my home.” Will growls. The arm with the gun comes up almost involuntarily.

“No, no, no…” Chilton’s eyes roll, and animal backed into a corner. The police are getting out of their cars. It’s fight or flight. Chilton’s always been a coward, he darts through the house and out the back door. The dogs make to give chase, but Hannibal stops them with a sharp command. He is an alpha after all.

The officers come in. Hannibal must give them direction because two of them take off after Chilton, guns at the ready. Will cannot hear over the blood pounding in his ears. An officer is trying to talk to him. He may still be growling. Why are all these strangers in his den?

“Will.” Hannibal’s voice breaks through his haze of territorial fury. He extracts the gun out of Will’s fingers, and begins to run his hand soothingly through his hair. “It is alright, *mano karštas karys* , the authorities will take it from here.”

As the adrenaline slowly drains from him at Hannibal’s gentle ministrations, he becomes aware of a draining somewhere else. He looks down. There is a dark stain on his pajama pants that is growing larger.

“Hannibal, I think-”

The alpha’s nostrils flare. “Yes. It is time. It seems all the excitement has started things moving.” He turns to the police officer, who is young and looks frankly terrified of the massively pregnant omega.

“We need to go to the hospital. Now.”

Baby Mine

Chapter Summary

Will is in labor.

Chapter Notes

I learned way more about pregnancy than I ever wanted to writing this fic. It sounds terrible, labor sounds worse. Bless those of you who manage it and are keeping the human race from dying out.

Turns out a police escort can get you from Wolf Trap to Baltimore pretty damn fast. It wasn't really necessary, as they end up sitting in the hospital room waiting for his contractions to come closer together. They are still about 15 minutes apart after they arrive.

Oh yeah, by the way, labor fucking hurts. Will always believed he had a fairly high pain tolerance, but this is making him seriously reconsider that stance. Also he's edgy from being away from his den, especially right after it had been violated. Hannibal plies him with soft blankets marked with their scents that they had brought so he could build a new nest, but Will is not particularly satisfied with it.

He halfheartedly pushes them around the bed, wrinkling his nose at the ever present smell of disinfectant. Hannibal is hovering beside him, and Will is torn between wanting to pull him closer and wanting to to tell him to fuck off. He settles for sitting back on the propped up mattress and scowling.

"Is there anything I can do for you, my dear?" He asks.

Will scowls harder. How the hell is this man always so put together? "Can you get my cervix to dilate faster?"

The alpha rubs the back of Will's neck, and it feels so nice he lets him continue. "If I could bear this discomfort for you, Will, I would."

"Yeah? Well, we'll talk about that if we ever want a second child." His hands clench in the blankets as he feels another contraction. "Time." He says.

"Five minutes and thirty-nine seconds since the last contraction."

Will's head falls back. "Fuck my life."

Hannibal's lips press together, but he has enough sense to not chide Will right now. He gives the omega some sips of water. There is a knock at the door, and he gets up to answer it.

"It's Alana, shall I let her in?" Hannibal asks. Will nods, Alana is part of his tribe, he feels comfortable letting her near his nest, as disgruntled as he is with it.

"Will! How are you feeling?" She comes in, carrying a large gift bag. Hannibal pulls the beta a chair up next to the bed.

"Impatient to get this baby out."

"I'll bet."

"What did you bring us?" He asks eyeing the bag.

"Why don't you find out?" She says with a twinkle in her eye. Will accepts the gift, breaking through the tape holding the top shut. He pulls out a beautiful crocheted baby blanket with multicolored squares of the softest wool Will has ever felt.

"Alana, this is beautiful!" He unconsciously rubs the corner against his cheek, marking it with his scent while enjoying the texture.

"Did you make this yourself?" Hannibal asks, reaching over so he can also pet it.

"Yep. I learned to crochet while leading an art therapy group."

"Then it is doubly appreciated for the time you put into it." He bestows one of his rare smiles upon Alana. Her cheeks pink.

"Well, I'm glad you like it."

Will wraps it around his shoulders. It still retained traces of Alana's personal perfume, but he didn't mind it.

"Any word on Chilton?" He asks, feeling a bit guilty as her face turns sour.

"They caught him pretty quickly. He fell through the ice in the creek behind your property. Jack has him in custody at the Bureau, as a person of interest in the Ripper case. That is the extent of my knowledge."

"The Ripper? Chilton?" Will makes a face.

"He fits the profile." She says.

"As much as we have one." Will concedes. "Still, seems a stretch. He said something about Gideon being found in his house?"

“Yeah. It-” She hesitates, shooting a glance at Hannibal. “Do you really want to hear this right now?”

Will shrugs. “Don’t have much else to do. You won’t shock me, even in my delicate state.” He manages a wry grin.

“It-it looks like Gideon’s been partially eaten.”

“Another cannibal?” Will raises his eyebrows, pieces of a puzzle clicking into place in his mind. “Well, if he is the Ripper it makes sense. He wasn’t taking trophies after all. He just didn’t want to waste meat.”

“Let’s talk about something else,” Alana says, looking ill.

She stays for about and hour, promising before departing to visit after they get settled back home. Leaning on Hannibal, Will takes a short trip up and down the hallway after she leaves, passing rooms filled with other imminently expectant couples. He takes a short nap back in their room, waking as the pain in his lower body grows more intense. Hannibal takes his shoes off and squeezes onto the bed with him, rubbing his abdomen. Will breathes out the way the online lamaze videos instructed.

Once it passes, Hannibal pushes the curls off of Will’s face, cupping his cheek. “I believe that one was three minutes since the last.”

Will groans in response. “Why is this taking so long?”

“They are getting more regular,” the alpha soothes, “and the baby appears to have dropped.”

Will looks down, and sure enough, the bump has shifted lower to between his hips.

“One of the nurses brought in a birthing ball, if you would like to try it.” Hannibal indicates a large blue ball in the corner of the room. Will glares balefully at it.

“I don’t think so. Help me get to the bathroom?” It’s a bit humiliating to have his mate see him in such a situation, but he figures that the man saw worse in the emergency room. Plus his sense of shame is rapidly dwindling.

They sit for a while in relative silence, Will squeezing Hannibal’s hand as the contractions grew longer. He calls his father and lets him know things are progressing. They only talk for a moment, Will not wanting to distress him with his obvious pain.

He hangs up, shifting on the bed, and breathing through another contraction.

“How much more time, do you think?” He asks Hannibal.

“They are regularly two minutes apart and lasting approximately forty seconds. You are in fully active labor. This phase can last three to five hours.” The alpha’s voice is soothing.

“So am I closer to three or five?” Hannibal’s thumb circles the back of his hand where he is holding it.

“Do you want me to check your dilation?”

“Shouldn’t we call a nurse for that?”

“If you would prefer.”

Will is actually more comfortable with the prospect of Hannibal reaching up inside of him than some stranger, so he agrees, propping his feet up on the bed. Hannibal meticulously washes his hands, and grabs a pair of gloves from the box on the counter.

The alpha rubs his belly soothingly as he reaches between the omega’s legs in what has to be one of the least sexy moments of Will’s life. And that includes when he was being treated for encephalitis. The skin has split to reveal the birth canal, and Will tries not to grimace at the pressure of Hannibal’s fingers pressing up and into him.

“I believe you are about five centimeters.”

“Ugh, I’m only halfway there?” Hannibal extracts his fingers and throws the gloves away.

“I’m afraid so, my dear. But everything seems to be going well. Neither you nor our daughter seem to be in any danger.”

“Our daughter.” Will muses. “Who still remains nameless.”

“I suppose now would be the time to finalize our decision.” Hannibal says.

“Are you sure I can’t sell you on Suzannah?”

“Like that terrible folk song? I think not.”

“Well, what do you think. And nothing that is the name of a celestial body. Or attached to Greek or Roman mythology.”

Hannibal sniffs. “I don’t see why you are so against them. They have been staples of classic literature.”

“Because most females in classical literature met terrible fates.”

Hannibal looks very much like he would like to argue, but realizes that discretion is the better part of valor.

“I guess family names are out. Dad is very against naming her Roberta.”

“That would exclude my uncle, as well.” Hannibal looks pensive. He runs his hand through Will’s hair, and the omega leans into it, breathing through his next contraction.

“I-” Hannibal starts, then clears his throat, but doesn’t continue.

“What is it?” Will tilts his head back to examine his mate’s face. For once, Hannibal is the one avoiding eye contact.

“My sister’s name was Mischa.” There is a wealth of unsaid words in that sentence, but Will doesn’t need words to understand. He kisses his alpha’s hand.

“I like it.”

I Never Thought I'd Love You So Much

Chapter Summary

> Baby and Co. go home. There's closure. Also a shooed in plot point the author had forgotten about.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Mischa Lecter-Graham comes into the world pink, screaming, and weighing six pounds and twelve ounces. Will is tired, sore, and full of more emotions than he can name. There is a moment when Hannibal has gone to shower when he is left alone with his new daughter that he is overcome with a helpless terror. How can he protect this infinitely precious and fragile thing? He knows better than most how horrible the world can be.

He strokes her fat little cheek, marveling at the soft new skin. He looks up as the bathroom door opens to reveal Hannibal, dressed simply in a red sweater and black slacks with bare feet. He stops and stares at the pair of them on the bed, and his face reflects the same fear filling Will. And somehow, that makes him feel better. They will both fuss and watch over their child and defend her to their last breath. They would do it together.

They take Mischa home to Wolf Trap the next day, to find the Crawfords and an Asian woman Will doesn't recognize waiting on the porch. Also a pile of gifts. Bella comes forward, and he allows the familiar omega to hug him and look over his pup.

"She's a treasure, Will." And he preens, because she truly is.

Jack keeps his distance on the porch, knowing better than to approach another alpha's mate and child, but he nods at the couple and congratulates them.

"I volunteered to bring the gifts from the lab team." He says. "And I thought you might want to hear what happened with Chilton."

"Let's go inside for that." Hannibal says, "It is still a bit cold out here. Will," he turns to his mate, "this is Chiyoh."

Will shoots the alpha a look that says *we'll talk about this later* , but civilly greets the quiet young woman.

They settle in the living room, the dogs sniffing curiously at the bundle in Will's arms. He patiently introduces the new member of the family, and is pleased when the dogs don't put up a fuss. Winston and Max curl up by his feet as he gingerly sits down in his chair. He's still pretty damn sore.

Hannibal stays a moment on the porch to speak to Chiyoh, then comes in alone, carrying the gifts. The Crawfords make themselves comfortable on the couch. Will, after some hesitation, allows Bella to hold Mischa.

“So Chilton?” Will asks to keep himself from snatching the baby back.

Jack nods, a conflict of emotions crossing his face. “I don’t want to spoil your homecoming, but I know I would want closure if I’d been through what you two have.”

"Though feel free to tell us to leave if we're bothering you," Bella says with a sly smile toward her husband. He gives her a faux long-suffering sigh.

Hannibal stands beside Will, a hand on his shoulder. “Alana told us a bit. You found evidence to tie him to the Ripper murders?”

“I’ll spare you the gory details, but, yes. There was enough in his house to put him away even if we hadn’t found traces of previous Ripper victims. We had Miriam observe him during interrogation. She…” He trails off.

“She recognized his voice?” Will hazards.

“And became...well, agitated isn’t strong enough a word for it. She grabbed my gun and shot him through the two way mirror.”

Will’s eyes widen. “Christ. Is she alright?”

“She had to be sedated. I don’t know if anyone can truly recover after what she went through.”

“She is strong, Jack,” Hannibal’s voice smoothly slides in. “With time, she will be able to reclaim her life. As terrible as it may seem, perhaps this is what she needed to put it behind her.”

“Is Chilton dead?” Will asks.

“In a coma. The doctors are unsure if he will ever recover brain function.”

“I’m still having a hard time believing he’s the Chesapeake Ripper.”

“He worked very hard to blind us all.” Hannibal says solemnly.

“He did at that, doctor. It has been a hell of a few years.” He smiles at his wife, gently rocking Mischa who’s baby blue eyes are staring with startly focus at the woman’s face. “It’s nice to be reminded that there are good things out there.”

Epilogue

Several months later, Will has finally gotten Mischa to go down for a nap, and is going to help Chiyoh (who moved into the converted loft over the barn, and while remaining somewhat aloof, has turned out to be an extremely competent godsend) with the laundry. How such a tiny person can generate so much mess is beyond him.

His phone vibrates in his pocket on the way downstairs (because he learned fast to have the volume turned off when he puts baby to sleep), and he answers without looking, expecting it to be Hannibal calling between patients to check up on them.

“Mr. Graham?” An overly cheerful voice that sends Will flashbacks of gleaming teeth chirps in his ear.

“I am calling on behalf of Match Maters.” She says before he can answer. “It has been five years since we matched you to your alpha, and I was wondering if you had time to take part in a life satisfaction survey? This a standard questionnaire that we use to improve our services and continue to help our clients find their best matches.” Yep, that rapid fire speech is unforgettable. Unfortunately.

Will blinks and considers for a moment. He thinks about waking up that morning to the sight of Hannibal, shirtless and hair mussed, feeding their daughter a bottle while murmuring to her in his mother tongue. He thinks about how he’d gotten Jackson also trained as a therapy dog and how he has been taking him and Winston to Bella’s shelters and a few of Alana’s therapy groups. How Alana had cried with joy when they’d asked her to be Mischa’s godmother. He thinks about his little house, always his safe boat on the ocean, now so full of life and love that it feels more like a lighthouse. He had been content with his life before he’d met Hannibal, but he had no idea he could ever be this happy.

“I’m pretty damn satisfied.” He says, then hangs up. Still doesn’t mean he supports that stupid mandatory mating law.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you all for your support and wonderful comments. I can't believe I thought this was going to be like a 1500 word one-shot.

For those of you who wanted some confirmation on whether Hannibal was good or bad, sorry! I always intended that to be ambiguous. So you can decide for yourself what to believe.

I may at some as-yet-undetermined-date write some follow ups for this story, but I'm eager to get started on some different projects now. Hope you all will join me for those, too!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!